WILDERNESS ISSUES IN THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS, FAMILY FARMS,
AND ENERGY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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WILDERNESS ISSUES IN THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 1986

House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy,
Committee on Agriculture,
Poteau, OK.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9 a.m., in the Robert S. Kerr Conference Center Auditorium, Carl Albert Junior College, Poteau, OK, Hon. Charles Whitley (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Also present: Representative Watkins.

Staff present: Charles Rawls.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES WHITLEY A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. Whitley. The hearing will come to order.

We are glad to be here to conduct this hearing on the subject of the possible wilderness designation of a portion of the Ouachita National Forest. I am Congressman Charles Whitley of North Carolina. I serve as chairman of the Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy of the House Agriculture Committee.

The House Agriculture Committee and the House Interior Committee have joint jurisdiction over the designation of wilderness areas. That is because the Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction over forestry in general and forest reserves not created from the public domain, and the Committee on the Interior has jurisdiction over public lands generally, and forests created from the public domain.

We have invited you here, those of you who are interested and those who are scheduled to testify, in order to afford people in Oklahoma and in this area an opportunity to express themselves on the wilderness options being proposed.

I might say that last Congress, our committee, working in conjunction with the Interior Committee, was successful in designating more acreage in the lower 48 States as wilderness than had ever been done before, and we did this by operating on a State-by-State basis.

Of course, the national forests don't necessarily follow State lines. But by doing it on a State-by-State basis, we were able to assess the economic and political implications, and in most cases we found compromises between those concerned about the economic aspects of forest management and the wildlife, environmental, and conservation interests who were concerned about preservation of pristine areas.

During the 98th Congress, there was a proposal to include a portion of the Ouachita National Forest in an Arkansas wilderness bill. However, all the hearings held on this bill involved only the Arkansas wilderness question, and the compromises that took place were all within the Arkansas congressional delegation in the House and the Senate. We did come up with a compromise bill, but the feeling was that we ought not to include Oklahoma National Forest lands in an Arkansas bill without giving Oklahoma people an opportunity to be heard.

We do have this morning a list of witnesses, and I think that the witness list is very balanced. I notice that one newspaper suggested these hearings were going to be cut and dried. I assure you they are not. We have witnesses scheduled to testify who represent the economic interests and timber interests. We have those scheduled to testify who represent the public interest, such as elected officials at both the local level and the State level; and we have witnesses scheduled who represent conservation, wildlife, and environmental interests. And it is our purpose and our intention to hear from all of these so that whatever action may be taken would be balanced in the light of the various interests that are involved.

I would like to say further that the witness list is relatively short. The written statements that have already been submitted to us are relatively short. We do hope to finish by noon inasmuch as I have a plane to catch back to North Carolina.

I want to welcome everyone to the hearing and before we hear from our first witness, I will invite Congressman Watkins to make any comments that he might have.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WES WATKINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. Watkins. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to say on behalf of all the people here today, and also the roughly 30,000 constituents I have heard from, we are honored that you would take time from your family and your district to come to the Third District of Oklahoma and Le Flore County for the purpose of hearing our people express their views.

I would like to say at the outset that this meeting is not cut and dried, because we tried to balance it with people who are for certain phases of the wilderness and against. I can assure you if it was cut and dried, I would go ahead and do it the way I want to do, that is if I knew exactly how I would want to do it.

But I have expressed to Charlie Whitley, the subcommittee chairman for Forests, Family Farms, and Energy, that I am very appreciative of his coming. Because he has jurisdiction over the legislation that will be crafted if there is legislation that will be crafted. I am hoping that we can find some workable decision.

I would say this: Charlie Whitley, and others, including myself, do not know exactly what shape or form the proposed legislation might take. I have faith that a compromise can be worked out from what we hear.

I also recognize that, like a lot of the decisions that I have to make in the Halls of Congress, I will not be able to satisfy everyone with this decision, but I want to assure all of you that I am trying to perceive the feelings and concerns of the people throughout my district. That happens to be the most important thing to me, the people who live in this part of the country that are trying to raise their families here and hope to raise their grandchildren here. That is more important to me than anything else.

And whatever decision we come up with, I want you to know that we are going to be trying to make a decision that will allow us to build a future for our people and allow our people the opportunity to stay and live and hopefully work in our part of the State of Oklahoma.

So I ask you for your consideration as we go through this day. As I told Charlie, "There will be a lot of conflicting testimony, probably controversial testimony," and he said, "Well, that is kind of like a typical wilderness hearing."

And I said, "Well, what I can digest from what has been said, basically we will have very strong differing views that will come forth." But that is what we want. We want all the various thoughts as part of the record.

And I would like to say that Senator Joe Johnson has left official written testimony to be made part of the record, Mr. Chairman, and also Representative Jim Hamilton has provided a letter to be made part of the record. Your State senator and representative are back at the State capital today beginning their new session, and could not be here today. They wanted to be here, but they have provided some written testimony.

So thank you for allowing me to make a few remarks. I think you are going to find that these people will be the same kind of congenial folks as those from North Carolina, and we are happy to have you here with us.

[The letters from Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hamilton appear at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. Whitley. Thank you, Wes.

Our first scheduled witness is Mr. George Kelley, who is the Deputy Forest Supervisor of the Ouachita National Forest, who is residing and stationed at Hot Springs, AR. Mr. Kelley, I hope you will give us a brief background of what brought this to pass.

I have glanced through your prepared statement, and I see you are prepared to mention briefly the RARE II study and the results of that study. I don't know if you have a map large enough to put on that stand. I know there are copies. I hope everybody got one so you can look and see the areas that Mr. Kelley is going to be talking about in his testimony.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. KELLEY, DEPUTY FOREST SUPERVISOR, OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST, HOT SPRINGS, AR, FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Kelley. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, there are four maps of the four areas we seriously considered in RARE II, and they will be available for the public to look at after the hearing.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you.

Mr. KELLEY. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss proposals to add certain lands within the Ouachita National Forest in the State of Oklahoma to the National Wilderness Preservation System and to release other lands for other uses than wilderness.

Four areas—Black Fork Mountain, Upper Kiamichi River, Beach Creek, and Rich Mountain—were first evaluated for their wilderness potential in RARE II, the roadless area review and evaluation. This process started in June 1977, and identified areas of roadless and undeveloped land in all national forests. The objective of RARE II was to determine which lands were best suited for wilderness and which lands were best suited for other uses.

The final environmental impact statement containing the recommendations for all National Forest System lands examined in RARE II, including Oklahoma, was released on January 4, 1979.

This environmental impact statement recommended 16,300 acres for wilderness designation in two areas in Le Flore County, OK—Black Fork Mountain and Upper Kiamichi River.

In October 1982, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a California district court decision that the RARE II environmental impact statement was inadequate with regard to 46 specific areas in California. In February 1983, in view of that court's ruling, the Forest Service began a nationwide reevaluation of RARE II roadless areas that had not already been designated as wilderness or released for other uses by law. This reevaluation is a part of the broad planning direction required by Congress in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

As a part of this planning effort, all RARE II areas in Oklahoma were again reevaluated in 1983. Also 10 additional areas, not included in the original RARE II inventory, were evaluated during this planning process. These 10 areas were not recommended for wilderness designation because of past management activities, including existing roads, timber harvest, and other developments that seriously detracted from their wilderness character.

The results of this roadless area reevaluation for national forest lands in Oklahoma were incorporated in a draft environmental impact statement and proposed forest plan released for public comment on March 15, 1985. The proposed forest plan recommended Black Fork Mountain, 5,500 acres, and Upper Kiamichi River, 10,090 acres, for wilderness designation. The Black Fork Mountain area is an addition to the existing Black Fork Wilderness in Arkansas.

Beach Creek, 11,225 acres, and Rich Mountain, 5,215 acres, were recommended for uses other than wilderness. The Beach Creek area was not recommended because 28 percent of the area is privately owned, and portions of these private lands are accessible only by crossing portions of national forest land being considered for wilderness. The area has numerous roads and much evidence of past timber management activities.

The Rich Mountain area is about 1 mile wide and is bounded on the south by the Talimena Scenic Drive and on the north by U.S. Highway 270 and the Kansas City Southern Railway. It was not recommended for wilderness because of the lack of topographic screening which results in limited opportunities for solitude.

Public comment on the proposed forest plan ended June 15, 1985. Based on our review of the public comments, no changes are anticipated in our recommendations for wilderness designation in the final plan for the Ouachita National Forest. We anticipate that the final plan and environmental impact statement will be made available within the next few weeks.

This concludes my prepared statement. I will be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kelley appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Kelley.

You might explain briefly, for the benefit of our guests and some of the other witnesses, the fact that you allude to briefly in your statement that designation of some wilderness areas within a national forest releases other areas in that same forest from further study and for other uses they might not be available in the absence of this designation.

In other words, it settles the issue of what you have to continue to study and what you don't have to study. One of the aspects of a wilderness designation is that it settles management questions so that you can go ahead with your timber cutting and other forest management. Our experience has been that everybody likes to get these things settled so that we don't have to continue forever with these studies.

Please comment briefly on that.

Mr. KELLEY. Yes, sir. Legislation that has been enacted for other States in the past few years has included language, that is termed sufficiency language as related to RARE II and release language for the other lands within that national forest within that study. That congressional finding settles the wilderness question for this plan period, and we are able to proceed with our activities, and basically we don't have to continue to study each area year after year after year.

Mr. WHITLEY. Your management task is much easier once this question is settled.

Mr. KELLEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. When the question is settled, legislation is passed containing what we call release and sufficiency language. That is the point I wanted to make.

Do you have any questions, Mr. Watkins?

Mr. WATKINS. Mr. Kelley, thank you for your statement. I will try to follow along on it.

In the original proposal of either RARE II or RARE I wilderness areas, were all the particular sites proposed or were there a limited number of sites other than these that are proposed now?

Mr. KELLEY. There were a number of areas that were proposed. I don't have the exact number. Most of those did not meet the inventory criteria. Only four met the inventory criteria.

Mr. WATKINS. And these are the four that are under consideration today?

Mr. KELLEY. Right.

Mr. **Watkins**. Could you express to us, in your opinion, the nature of the terrain that is probably still in virgin condition and has not been used for any forestry, because of the terrain?

Mr. **Kelley**. Of the four areas, Black Fork Mountain has the most rugged terrain.

Mr. **Watkins**. It is the roughest. What would be the second?

Mr. **Kelley**. Upper Kiamichi.

Mr. **Watkins**. Upper Kiamichi.

Has any forestry work been done in the Black Fork Mountain area?

Mr. **Kelley**. Very little, sir.

Mr. **Watkins**. Very little. What about the Upper Kiamichi?

Mr. **Kelley**. There has been some past management activities, both wildlife habitat improvement, some road construction, and some timber management activities.

Mr. **Watkins**. What portion of that 10,090 acres would you say has had some kind of forestry practices as far as timber cutting on it?

Mr. **Kelley**. I don't have a specific number, but I would say probably less than 10 percent.

Mr. **Watkins**. Approximately 10 percent has had some?

Mr. **Kelley**. Yes.

Mr. **Watkins**. I would be interested in you providing for the record that area that has had some kind of timber cutting on it.

Mr. **Kelley**. I will provide that, sir.

Mr. **Watkins**. This information will give us some insight, because I know these are some of the thoughts that have been expressed from time to time, that you can hardly walk through, and some of the others you can get through, and some has been cut. So it would be good to have a little insight.

I am assuming that as we go from Black Fork Mountain terrain to Upper Kiamichi the terrain is not as rough. What would be the third roughest?

Mr. **Kelley**. Rich Mountain, I would say.

Mr. **Watkins**. Rich Mountain. Is there any estimate of timberwork that has been done on Rich Mountain that you could give us?

Mr. **Kelley**. I would rather provide that at a later date, because I really don't know, sir.

Mr. **Watkins**. Then I noticed in the testimony that Beach Creek had 11,225 acres, and somewhere in the statement you said the area was not recommended because 28 percent of the areas are privately owned. Does that condition still exist today?

Mr. **Kelley**. That is true.

Mr. **Watkins**. And I can only assume that a larger percentage of Beach Creek has had timbering activities on it?

Mr. **Kelley**. Yes; it has had more timber management activities than any of the other areas.

Mr. **Watkins**. Could you provide some kind of color schematic drawing——

Mr. **Kelley**. Yes, sir.

Mr. **Watkins**. Or shading so we could know when we look later on which are private areas. That might give us good insight as we are looking at the entire program.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. **Kelley**. Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Fox Wood III, and he is a member of the Le Flore County Conservation District Committee. And I talked to Mr. Wood a little bit before the hearing, and I found out he has the distinction of having served a very pleasant interlude during World War II at Fort Bragg, NC, which is very close to my district.

Mr. Wood, you got a little taste of North Carolina while you were there, and I know you are going to bring that to your testimony here this morning. We will be glad to hear from you.

Mr. **Watkins**. I would like to recognize one fact, though. He came back home after he finished that.

Mr. **Whitley**. Didn't we all.

STATEMENT OF FOX WOOD III, MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, LE FLORE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SPIRO, OK

Mr. **Wood**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Watkins, and members of the staff.

I can only respond to Congressman Whitley by saying that as the years grow longer, my experience in North Carolina and Fort Bragg becomes fonder.

I have been a resident of Le Flore County for more than 35 years. My wife and I live on and operate a farm and ranch near Spiro. For the past 16 years, I have served as a publicly elected member of the board of directors of the Le Flore County Conservation District. During part of that time, I served as chairman.

I am here today at the request of our chairman, Mr. Charles Basham, to serve as the official spokesman for our district board. In this capacity, I appear here today to register our opposition to the establishment of wilderness sites in the Oklahoma portion of the Ouachita National Forest.

Our district comprises 724,000 acres in the northern part of Le Flore County. We have some 375,000 acres of public and private timberlands within the boundaries of our district, chiefly in the southern part. Two of the proposed wilderness sites, Black Fork Mountain and Rich Mountain, are in our district. The other two sites adjoin us to the south and are located in the Talihina Conservation District. I have a letter here with me today indicating their support for our position. I also have a letter from the Latimer County Conservation District Board supporting us.

We oppose the establishment of these wilderness areas on many grounds: Our first objection is that none of these areas qualify for wilderness designation according to the criteria set out in the Federal act governing the establishment of such areas.

One of the often heard justifications for establishing wilderness areas is to save a part of the land so that our children and our grandchildren can experience the joy of seeing the land just the way it was when great, great granddaddy first saw it. Well, this subcommittee should keep firmly in mind that, in this instance, we are not talking about the priceless redwoods, a vanishing seashore, stands of beautiful virgin pine timber or endangered streams and rivers. These are not vast, pristine tracts of land that need quick and drastic action to preserve them for us and generations to come from the depredations of man.

We are considering arbitrarily selected pieces of forest land, most of which have been logged over at least twice. With the possible exception of one, all have roads, trails, campsites and other obvious evidences of man's occupation and use.

Considering the present state of these tracts plus the time required for a natural return of the climax flora under wilderness conditions, our children and grandchildren had better be long lived, because they are going to have to wait at least 300 or 400 years to see what great, great granddaddy saw.

There are many of us, however, who are not all that enthralled with what great, great granddaddy saw, and we like some of the things he didn't see. He never saw Broken Bow, Pine Creek, Wister, or Cedar Lakes. He never saw the Talimena Drive. He never saw a light bulb. But he saw an awful lot of a Georgia stock at the south end of a northbound mule.

Our second objection is that the establishment of wilderness areas violates the multiple use conept which has been an invaluable and historic cornerstone of public land management policy. This concept simply means that the public lands shall be put to as many beneficial uses as possible commensurate with good stewardship.

We believe that livestock grazing, timber production, mineral development, and recreation, including hunting, fishing, and camping, are all acceptable uses when properly managed. Any arbitrary restriction of these and other acceptable practices solely for the benefit of a small group to the detriment of a much larger group represents, in our view, poor management of public lands.

Our third objection to the wilderness areas is that they result in the loss of virtually all income from these public lands. Le Flore County has one of the lowest per capita incomes and one of the highest unemployment rates in our State. The timber industry, the oil and gas industry, and coal mining are major sources of jobs and income for the people of this area. Any action to establish areas where these activities are prohibited cancels present and future paychecks for people who need them most.

Timber sale from our national forests send millions and millions of dollars to our Federal Treasury and to county governments and school districts. Wilderness advocates like to bolster their cause by claiming little or no loss from the proposed sites because of low timber income. What they neglect to say, however, is that the low income is not a matter of adverse slopes or soils but rather a complete absence of management. I am sure members of this committee have seen instances where a single crop was planted on two similar adjoining fields with one outproducing the other by threefold or fourfold, and the only difference was management.

Our district board recently spent an entire day visiting two of the proposed sites. We took trucks and all-terrain four-wheelers. We found that a significant portion of the Black Fork Mountain area and a major portion of the Upper Kiamichi area have the soils and slopes for major timber production should these areas be planted and managed with these goals in mind.

We also object to the ban on mineral exploration and development in the wilderness area. We have capabilities to drill oil, gas, steam, or carbon dioxide wells in downtown Oklahoma City; Fort Smith, AR; or the middle of a national forest without damaging the environment. A wilderness area, however, is forever off limits for such activities. Never mind the prospect of literally millions of dollars in revenue for our Federal Treasury.

Farfetched? Not at all. Just a few miles west of these proposed sites lie several of the Nation's largest gas fields generating millions of dollars each year in gross production taxes for the State of Oklahoma. Only a few years ago some of our best petroleum geologists considered these areas very poor prospects for oil and gas production, and, for the most part, the deeper horizons there have yet to be explored.

Our board sees nothing wrong with the proper development of our national resources throughout the Ouachita National Forest, and there is emphasis on the word "proper." In the past, there were unquestionably examples of poor management of our national forests. But now is not then. This is not great, great granddaddy's time. Now we have a whole battery of Federal laws and regulations, and we have the National Forest Service and other Federal agencies in place to see that people abide by them. Our board sees no threat to these lands as they are now being managed by the Forest Service. One possible exception would be our recommendation that clearcutting not be practiced in the National Forest.

We also vigorously object to the wilderness area restrictions that rule out the physical and chemical means that man has spent decades developing to control forest fires and timber insect and disease outbreaks. Such restrictions pose a potentially deadly threat for the spread of these forest scourges to adjoining public and private timberlands.

Someone here will surely hasten to remind me that the Wilderness Act provides that in emergencies, the Secretary of Agriculture or his agent may authorize such measures as he may deem appropriate to deal with such situations. Anyone who believes that a request for such authorization could move up through Government channels, back down again to the appropriate agency and be put into effect in time to meet the demands of the moment must surely believe in the tooth fairy. It is a shame that neither wilderness advocates nor Government officials are likely to figure out a way to teach forest fires and the southern pine beetle to respect wilderness boundary lines.

Our fifth objection to the unnecessary conversion of national forest acres into wilderness areas is that it isn't fair. It is not fair for all of us to pay for the pleasure of a very few backpackers—young enough and strong enough and with free time to trek 5, 10, or 15 miles into and out of a wilderness area. For wilderness areas minus roads, trails, campsites, picnic tables, privies, water, grills, litter cans, and telephones are off limits to 98 percent of those of us who presently enjoy our national forests.

There should be signs at every wilderness area that read, "Take your picnic basket, your camper, your boat, and your foliage tour and move out. You are not welcome here." And there should be an additional line on the sign that says, "But you are still required to pay the tax bills to maintain these areas and make up the deficits created when all income from these places is reduced to near zero."

Our sixth objection is that most of the people in southeastern Oklahoma don't want these wilderness areas. These families who have hunted, fished, picnicked and camped in this forest area for generations know better than anyone in Oklahoma City or Tulsa that you don't have to destroy roads and trails and drastically limit access to preserve trees, fish, wildlife and clear lakes and streams. They resent the creation of mountains of misinformation regarding the endless stream of tourist dollars that will flow to local merchants from a nebulous army of backpackers and wilderness lovers. These ridiculous assumptions come from urban-based association executives and State officials who are very well paid to dream up these projections.

Our evaluation of these estimates is, baloney. The people of this area know that out of every 100 tourists that come here, about 98 want to picnic or camp conveniently, do a little hunting or fishing, see the redbud and dogwood in the spring and the foliage in the fall, and they aren't looking to hike 5 to 10 miles to do any of these things. What they would like is more access, not less. They have about as much interest in a backpack as they have in a rattlesnake.

A few months ago, our board circulated petitions in this area to support our position. These weren't shotgun mailings paid for by dues from some big organization. They were hand carried free by volunteers or supervised by small businessmen in their establishments. In a few days, we collected over 1,500 signatures from people who live here. With few exceptions, the signatures are accompanied by an address and an occupation. In our written presentation, here, the committee will find copies of these petitions.

Another item of interest to your committee, yesterday at its regular business meeting, our board of county commissioners voted unanimously to oppose the establishment of any wilderness areas in Le Flore County. The same board in Latimer County has taken a similar action.

A long-time State legislator who represented this area encompassed by these wilderness proposals recently retired. He was the majority leader of our State house of representatives at the time. Recently he told me that not once during his 8-year tenure was he approached by a local constituent to support any wilderness area.

From these comments, the committee may infer that our board has some sort of aversion to those who like to hike and fish and camp in remote areas. This is most certainly not the case. We would welcome and encourage these people to visit in this part of Oklahoma. We simply feel that the numbers in this category are small and that they do not warrant the removal of thousands of acres of public forest land from the use and enjoyment of the vast majority for the sole benefit of a very few.

It should be noted here that in the Arkansas portion of the Ouachita, there are some 50,000 acres set aside as wilderness. Several of these areas adjoin Oklahoma and all are easily accessible to Oklahomans. In addition, there is the 2,000-acre Kerr Arboretum near the Talimena Drive. It is managed essentially as a wilderness area and is open to all for hiking, camping, and hunting.

The ironic thing about this whole matter, Mr. Chairman, is that for the most part, the Ouachita National Forest in its present state is a virtual wilderness. If I could blindfold every member of your committee and your staff and transport you to almost any part of this 1½ million acre forest, remove your blindfold and ask you where you were, almost without exception, your first comment would be, "Good heavens. I am in a wilderness." And you would be right. There are countless areas in this forest where you can go today and hike and camp, hunt and fish for days without seeing another human being. And there is little prospect that this will change. The Forest Service has no intention of building an endless network of roads into every part of the forest, although additional access would be welcomed by most people.

I guess, Mr. Chairman, that our board's position boils down to the old familair saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

We would like to express our appreciation to this subcommittee for coming to our area and conducting this hearing. We want to thank you for the opportunity to be here and express our views.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wood appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. Wood.

That is a very comprehensive statement, and I am sure it expresses in very graphic terms the position of your board.

Mr. Watkins, do you have any questions or comments?

Mr. WATKINS. Just to clarify your position, one thing I wanted to ask, if a county commissioner is here. Later on we will have time for comments, and we would appreciate any comment by a county commissioner.

One of your first objections is that none of these areas qualify for wilderness designation. That is a fairly all-inclusive word, "none." And I will try to evaluate that. I am quite sure that some might qualify and other areas will probably not meet the criteria and I appreciate your outline like it is here.

One of the key concerns I do have happens to be the loss of revenue, and one of the things I am going to have an in-depth study of is how do we offset that revenue loss if a significant amount of land is set aside. If it cannot be offset, I think it would be one of the real negative factors we would have to look at. I know there is very little money to go around on the county level today and a very difficult situation exists for some of the schools. So I can assure you that we are not going to shoot from the hip. That is not my characteristic. I try to be businesslike on this matter, and, Mr. Wood, I can assure you I am going to be carefully considering revenue loss as one of the factors.

I also want to always encourage our people to come visit this area. But I would like for them to visit more than one or two weekends a year. I would like to see good, decent jobs created so they would be able to live, and work, and raise their families here.

The mineral exploration you brought up is another thing that will have to be carefully evaluated. I am not an authority on wilderness law, but that is definitely one of the questions that we have got to try to ask ourselves. Also are we allowed to write that legislation that makes sure we have adequate fire protection and we can protect against insects and diseases that are going to affect landowners throughout the area?

Those are some of the things we have to make sure we answer as we look, and consider this situation. I also read Senator Joe Johnson is concerned about this and former Senator, now, Representative Jim Hamilton, also has expressed concern about this.

One thing, Mr. Wood, I think that your comment arouses a little curiosity for me, and I know it probably did for the chairman, also: You basically had an indictment against the Forest Service on their management practices, because you indicated you thought there could be better management. Do you have any comment on that?

Mr. WOOD. No, sir; what I am saying is that in many of these areas, it has been a conscious decision—and I don't necessarily quarrel with it—not to manage certain areas for timber production. All I am saying is that if the time ever came that we needed the timber, these areas could—the timber production and the income from these areas could be substantially increased if that were a goal.

I might like to say one more thing, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WHITLEY. Yes.

Mr. WOOD. One of the things that is not controversial in this area and is directly involved in all of these things, whether we are talking about tourism and outdoor recreation and activities, hunting, fishing, and camping, we would like to urge you and the members of your committee to continue to support the tick research program that is now being conducted by the Federal Government in association with the Kerr Foundation. We think probably this may be the greatest single benefit—if we can find a way to control or eradicate the Lone Star tick, it will probably do more than anything else can be done in this area to encourage tourism and recreation.

Mr. WATKINS. I would probably concur with that statement, having spent a lot of my young days down here with the tick. We have made some headway on the tick problem through the Agricultural Research Service and others. While it is not directly involved with this testimony, indirectly it affects timber country and how we try to eradicate the tick.

I would like to make one comment on the lighter side. You said if you took us out in that million acres, and blindfolded us, and stood us out there, and took the blindfold off, you would probably——

Mr. WOOD. I would plan to bring you back.

Mr. WATKINS. The first comment you would say would be, "Good heavens, I am in the wilderness." I would probably say, "Goodness gracious, I am lost. [Laughter.]

So let me assure you, your testimony is well received, and we appreciate having you.

Mr. WOOD. Thank you very much, Mr. Congressman and Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. Wood.

Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Robert Timmer, who is the western region land manager of the Weyerhaeuser Co. from DeQueen, AR.

Mr. Timmer, we have your written statement here, it will be accepted in its entirety for the record. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT TIMMER, WESTERN REGION LAND MANAGER, WEYERHAEUSER CO.

Mr. TIMMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Congressman Watkins. I appreciate you providing this opportunity to me to make a contribution to these important areas.

I am responsible for land use, land acquisitions, and land disposals on the western part of our 1.8 million acres of privately owned timberland in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

I imagine I feel much like many other farmers and ranchers here today, trying to manage his land responsibly and for a profit. My main intention here today is to bring you the viewpoint and the concerns of a private landowner possibly faced with major land-use changes on his neighboring land. Unless you are a landowner making your living on the land, you may have difficulty identifying with some of my concerns. But I assure you my concerns are real, and I believe they are valid.

Despite what you may have read or heard, Weyerhaeuser Co. has a longstanding history of support for the designation of quality wilderness areas on public lands. That position holds true in this debate, also. We commend you for your efforts to move this matter along toward a satisfactory conclusion. We believe that it is time to resolve this debate and to continue with intelligent management of the people's forest. We believe that all of our best interests will be served by finding a common ground. We have high hopes that you will succeed in that.

Our position in favor of additional Oklahoma and Arkansas wilderness areas has been on record for many months. Our primary interest at that time was and continues to be the quality and location of additional wilderness areas. We believed then, as we do now, that the final recommendations of extensive studies established by Congress, known as the RARE II process, ought to be the basis for additional wilderness area designations.

I would like to emphasize our firm belief that this wilderness issue should be and can be put to rest. Consequently, Weyerhaeuser Co. strongly supports renewed efforts led by you to draft a reasonable compromise so as to finally settle the wilderness debate. We believe that the interests of all Oklahoma citizens will best be served not through continued argument but through settlement.

I spoke earlier of the responsibilities and concerns of a private landowner. I doubt that Weyerhaeuser Co.'s concerns are any different than those of any other private landowner when a major land use decision is about to take place on his neighboring lands. Concerns about additional buffer zones or other restrictions of adjacent lands are always there.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, I have tried to make it clear that Weyerhaeuser Co. does endorse wilderness areas for Oklahoma. Our own preference, as we have testified in the House hearings and again here today, is for quality wilderness area as represented in the existing wilderness areas we now have and the additional acres identified in Oklahoma that was recommended under the

RARE II process. Two of these areas are the Black Fork Mountain and the Upper Kiamichi River.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Timmer appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you, Mr. Timmer.

You mentioned the areas that were originally designated in RARE II, and if I understand it, the management plan just submitted more recently than RARE II by the Forest Service more narrowly restricts the lands to be designated. That is correct, is it not?

Mr. **Timmer**. That is right.

Mr. **Whitley**. One further question of you, Mr. Timmer. You are recommending that we have wilderness legislation.

Mr. **Timmer**. Right.

Mr. **Whitley**. There will be a compromise worked out where some area will be designated as a wilderness, and the rest will be released for normal developmental practices. Is that important to Weyerhaeuser and to other commercial interests that we get release and sufficiency language on areas not to be included?

Mr. **Timmer**. Yes, it is. Our major concern is the buffer zones of the adjoining lands on the boundary of the wilderness areas, and we are interested in continuing our normal forestry management practices, such as logging and road construction, and are not wanting to be limited with the buffer zone restrictions.

Mr. **Whitley**. Suppose we don't get any compromise or we don't do any wilderness designation, we go along the way we are, what adverse effects will that have on the industry?

Mr. **Timmer**. If we don't designate any wilderness areas?

Mr. **Whitley**. And don't have any release and sufficiency language.

Mr. **Timmer**. I don't think it will have any adverse effect on the timber industry. I believe, you know, we would still be able to—we will still be able to harvest and acquire the timber from the areas.

Mr. **Whitley**. Well, you would still have the continuing studies——

Mr. **Timmer**. Right.

Mr. **Whitley**. In those areas that would be restricted because they continue to be under study.

Mr. **Timmer**. I don't believe it would have any effect on it.

Mr. **Whitley**. But you feel if we have wilderness designation and settle it once and for all, that that would be beneficial to all concerned?

Mr. **Timmer**. Right. I sure do.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you.

Mr. Watkins.

Mr. **Watkins**. I only have one question. Does your company do any timberwork in the national forest?

Mr. **Timmer**. The only thing we do is acquire national forest timber contract purchases.

Mr. **Watkins**. Indirectly, but not directly?

Mr. **Timmer**. Right, indirectly, we would acquire the timber and harvest it.

Mr. **Watkins**. Do you buy stumpage?

Mr. **Timmer**. That is right, buying stumpage.

Mr. **Watkins**. And cut it and move it?

Mr. **Timmer**. That is correct. That is the only effect it would have, we would lose that source of our timber supply if it was designated as a wilderness area.

Mr. **Watkins**. That is all I have.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much, Mr. Timmer.

Mr. **Timmer**. Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Audrey Ballentine, who is chairman of the Le Flore County Wilderness Association of Wister, OK, and we welcome you at this time, Mr. Ballentine.

I believe you are right at home here since you are affiliated with the college.

Mr. **Ballentine**. Yes, sir, that is right.

STATEMENT OF AUDREY BALLENTINE, CHAIRMAN, LE FLORE COUNTY WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION, WISTER, OK

Mr. **Ballentine**. Congressman Watkins, Chairman Whitley, and members of the subcommittee, I welcome this opportunity to come and present the presentation of the Le Flore County Wilderness Association.

The Le Flore County Wilderness Association proposes the addition of the following four areas in the Ouachita National Forest to the National Wilderness Preservation System: Black Fork Mountain roadless area, Upper Kiamichi River roadless area, Rich Mountain roadless area, and Beach Creek roadless area. These areas consist of approximately 26,000 acres.

Now, there are 205,000 acres of the Ouachita National Forest within the boundaries of Le Flore County. This comprises only about 12.6 percent of the total Ouachita National Forest within the boundaries of our county.

With vast areas of southeastern Oklahoma being converted to pine plantation or pasture, it makes sense to set aside a small portion of our forests to be managed by nature. Areas where hunting, camping, hiking, fishing, and nature study would be allowed but logging, development, and motorized travel would be prohibited.

These are the last mountainous, roadless, and unspoiled forest areas of our State; and we feel that as such, they should be preserved in their natural state for the enjoyment and enrichment of present and future generations.

After much research and thought, it is the opinion of the Le Flore County Wilderness Association that the greatest value of these four areas to the people of our area and of our State would come through wilderness designation. This opinion is based on the following information concerning these issues: economy, wildlife conservation, education, and recreation.

Economic analysis shows that no significant negative economic impact will result because of wilderness designation. The national Forest Service projects a loss of less than 1.1 cents per acre if the Black Fork Mountain roadless area and Upper Kiamichi roadless area receive wilderness designation, and a loss of less than 2 cents per acre if all the roadless areas receive wilderness designation.

The National Forest Service also finds that effect on employment will be negligible. In an Ouachita National Forest news bulletin, dated November 7, 1983, the following description is given each of the four areas concerning mineral producing potential:

> There are no producing mines or fields and no proven reserves. Potential is low for oil and gas, hard rock and low-value bulk material production.

In a study by the State of Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department completed in 1984, it was found that the economic gain if the proposed areas were designated as wilderness would amount to about $1.7 million; and a study done in 1985 projected a positive economic impact of about $2.4 million.

The county income from national forests is determined by how many acres of the national forest lies within the boundary of a county and not where the timber is cut. School income is determined by how many acres of national forests lie within the boundaries of the school district and not where the timber is cut; 25 percent of the gross revenue of the timber sales and leases of the national forest comes through the counties distributed on a pro rata share depending on how many acres of the national forest are within the boundaries of the counties.

The schools in Le Flore County receive 25 percent of that, of the proceeds of the county. The county commissioner projects receive 75 percent of that.

The following statistics concerning revenue from Ouachita national forest received by Le Flore County over the years 1971 through 1984 are enlightening when we take into consideration that all four of those areas have effectively been treated as wilderness since 1978.

It is an unusual situation when you can actually look at the effects of a law or an act before it has been put into effect, because these areas, these four areas we are discussing, have effectively been treated as wilderness since 1978. In the——

Mr. WHITLEY. Let me stop you a moment there, Mr. Ballentine.

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes.

Mr. WHITLEY. Is that because they came under the provisions of the Roadless Area Review?

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes, sir, that is correct.

Mr. WHITLEY. And that no timber has, in fact, been cut or no use of those lands since 1978?

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes.

Mr. WHITLEY. All right, sir.

Mr. BALLENTINE. The only changes in the use of that land since 1978 was in 1983 when the Beach Creek area and the Rich Mountain area went back into the Forest Management Planning, there has been some roads built, I understand, and some timber sales proposed, but not put through. So there has been no timber sales offered in these lands since 1978.

I think it would be interesting to note that the years 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, and 1984, the last 6 years, that the average increase of income to Le Flore County has been 21.5 percent per year with these areas set aside. Obviously no negative impact. If this were an indication of impact, I would like to see us be able to do this to the cattle industry of our State.

We have gained each year at the rate of 21.5 percent. Obviously, setting aside these four areas had no significant negative impact on the income received by Le Flore County.

We concur with the department of tourism that the long-term gains of wilderness designation and management can be shown to outweigh the short-term commitments of timber management.

From a biological standpoint, several unique species of vertebrates occur in these areas. Perhaps the most notable is the rate Rich Mountain salamander, which occurs only in this vicinity and in a very small area in western Arkansas. The Kiamichi shiner is another relatively rare species which occurs in the Upper Kiamichi River area. These areas will also provide a refuge for the black bear and possibly the eastern cougar from encroachment of an intolerant populace.

These areas with their mixed hardwood stands of timber would provide food and shelter for the species of wildlife that need older growth forest, species of wildlife that are diminishing due to high-yield forestry practices. Additionally, several unique and diverse plant communities occur on these areas.

In the early part of this century when deer and turkey had all but disappeared from eastern Oklahoma, the only remnants survived in the most remote mountainous areas, areas exactly like the four areas under discussion. Wilderness designation of the four areas will benefit wildlife and provide a future for some species that might otherwise not survive.

The Upper Kiamichi River, Black Fork Mountain, Rich Mountain, and Beach Creek are an important part of Oklahoma's wilderness heritage and ties with the land. These are four of the last remaining areas in our State that are relatively undeveloped. They are a key to our ecological past and a gateway to its future.

If these four areas receive the wilderness status, they will become a living laboratory by which scientists of the present and future can measure the positive or negative impact of man on his environment. They will serve as a standard to which other altered environments can be compared.

As population pressures increase, areas like these will become all the more important as refuges to be sought out for solitude, knowledge, and inspiration.

All four areas have a tremendous recreational potential for hunting, camping, hiking, and nature study with Upper Kiamichi and Beach Creek providing additional opportunity to enjoy recreational activities associated with clear mountain streams. There are 7 miles of hiking trails in the Upper Kiamichi roadless area and an established hiking trail along Beach Creek in the Beach Creek roadless area.

Rich Mountain and Upper Kiamichi are separated by the Talimena Scenic Drive and are enjoyed each year by thousands of people who are exhilarated by the panoramic view afforded by the towering pine-hardwood forests and plunging mountain valleys. It would be a shame for visitors to come to our area, to come down the Talimena Scenic Drive and look off into the Kiamichi River bottom or the Rich Mountain area and see the roads staring back at them in clearcuts.

As the population of our State continues to increase and the need for recreational land grows more critical, we will more fully appreciate areas of this type being available.

Yes, they would be cut off to nonmotorized travel. But those who enjoy driving to the areas where they want to have their recreation would be the ones who would really benefit because there is 179,000 acres that they would still be able to drive to. So why should they have 26,000 and open them up also when there is all this vast amount that you can drive into? We are asking for just a small portion.

We must keep in mind that national forest lands belong to the people of this Nation and do not exist for the primary benefit of any particular industry or group. A statement made by Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, aptly describes the relationship between the people and their national forest lands. He said, "National forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them run."

The people have clearly stated what they want done concerning wilderness designation for these four areas. In a survey taken in 1983 by the U.S. Forest Service to determine public sentiment about wilderness designation for these areas, the following results were obtained:

For those responses or signatures which indicated whether they wanted it wilderness or whether they didn't want wilderness, in Black Fork Mountain area, there were 1369 responses or signatures, 87 percent were for wilderness, 13 percent were against wilderness.

In Upper Kiamichi, 1,386 responses or signatures, 86 percent for it, 14 percent against.

Rich Mountain area: 609 responses or signatures; 67 percent for; 33 percent against.

In Beach Creek area, 503 responses or signatures; 74 percent for; 26 percent against.

In Beach Creek there were 736 responses that indicated that they might have some further looking at the situation. And of those responses suggesting further planning, the reasons most commonly given involved wilderness, something to do with wilderness, or the wilderness effect.

Recently a survey was sent to each home in Le Flore County concerning wilderness designation of Black Fork Mountain, Rich Mountain, Upper Kiamichi, and Beach Creek with responses to be sent to the Le Flore County Wilderness Association. Approximately 170 responses were received as a result of this survey with only 1 respondent stating that he was against the wilderness designation of these four areas.

We have today some letters from individuals that we would like to enter into the record that we will present. Also, there has been a petition circulated for wilderness, mainly in Le Flore County, but also in some of the other areas of the third district, some of the other areas of Oklahoma which also we would like to enter into evidence containing approximately 1,100 signatures.

If one were to return to the Le Flore County portion of the Ouachita National Forest 25 years ago, or even 15 years ago, he would realize that these four areas were not the gems of the forest. They would not have been chosen as the best areas for this generation to preserve to pass onto future generations. They were not the most suitable for wildlife, recreation, timber, or nature study.

These areas are steep, they are rocky, they are rugged, they are remote, they have poor quality timber. That is why they remain roadless. And for the most part were spared the sting of the chain saw and the bulldozer. We are here today to debate the fate of these last four remaining wild areas. No, they were not the best that our forest had to offer as a legacy to our children and grandchildren, but they are all that we have left. And for that reason, they are extremely important, and they are worth whatever effort is necessary to save them.

I am a third generation eastern Oklahoman. I have lived here for 43 years, and I feel that most Le Flore County residents are very appreciative of the national forest land that is within the boundary of their county, and many of them are frequent visitors to these lands. We grew up enjoying the many recreational activities afforded by the streams and woodlands of the beautiful Ouachita National Forest, and we want our children and grandchildren to be able to continue to enjoy and know the forest as we have.

With the onslaught of high-yield forestry techniques and population growth, the mixed pine-hardwood forests of eastern Oklahoma are changing into pine plantations and pastures and it is our strong feeling that the time to set aside these four areas in their relatively natural and unspoiled condition is now. We can thereby share with future generations a part of the heritage with which our generation has been so richly blest.

And I will agree that we probably have not seen it like what our grandpas saw, but I don't think our grandpas ever saw clearcut, either.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ballentine appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. Ballentine.

Please remain for a couple of questions and comments.

As I understand your position, you are recommending that we go back to the regional RARE II recommendations for four areas as opposed to the more recent Forest Service Management Study report which recommends only the Black Fork and Upper Kiamichi for wilderness designation. You are going back to the original RARE II recommendations?

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. One other question. It looks like we are having conflicting petitions and public opinion polls which is not unusual and not surprising, I might say, but I ask you if you know, in the survey taken in 1983 by the Forest Service to determine public sentiment about wilderness designation, what was the population included in that survey?

Mr. BALLENTINE. I would assume that there was a published request for responses from the public put out by the national forest. This is normally the way they do it, and they petition the people for input and then they take this input and compile it.

Mr. WHITLEY. Are you talking about publication in the Federal Register and responses received? Is that what you are referring to in describing it as a survey——

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes, sir, by the Forest Service, itself.

Mr. WHITLEY. You are talking about the publication in the Federal Register?

Mr. BALLENTINE. I think that is probably right. I have a Forest Service bulletin that contains this information and I am not sure if they would enter it in the Federal Register or not, but I think it probably was entered. I think it was and put in as a part——

Mr. WHITLEY. Of course that publication's circulation is very widespread over a very wide area, even to outside the State of Oklahoma.

Mr. BALLENTINE. Yes, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you.

Mr. WATKINS. Just three or four questions.

In your comments, Audrey, you have indicated this is about 12 percent——

Mr. BALLENTINE. 12.6 percent.

Mr. WATKINS. 12.6 percent of the land of the national forest being under consideration for wilderness area designation.

Mr. BALLENTINE. In Le Flore County.

Mr. WATKINS. In Le Flore County.

Mr. BALLENTINE. There is 1,495,000 acres of national forest, but the rest of it is in Arkansas. This figures to 1.6 percent of the total Ouachita National Forest.

Mr. WATKINS. Along that line, you indicated on page 2 of your testimony that the revenue received by Le Flore County increased in the last 5 years even though these areas have effectively been treated as wilderness since 1978.

If you have the information on what has effectively been treated as wilderness, I would appreciate that being made available to us.

Mr. BALLENTINE. OK. I think that will be a matter of congressional record, wouldn't it, Congressman Whitley?

Mr. WATKINS. If you happen to have it from the local view point I would like it from the local group.

Mr. BALLENTINE. I will try to provide it.

[The material follows:]

WILDERNESS
FOR
OKLAHOMA

NOW IS THE TIME TO PRESERVE

OKLAHOMA'S HERITAGE

WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

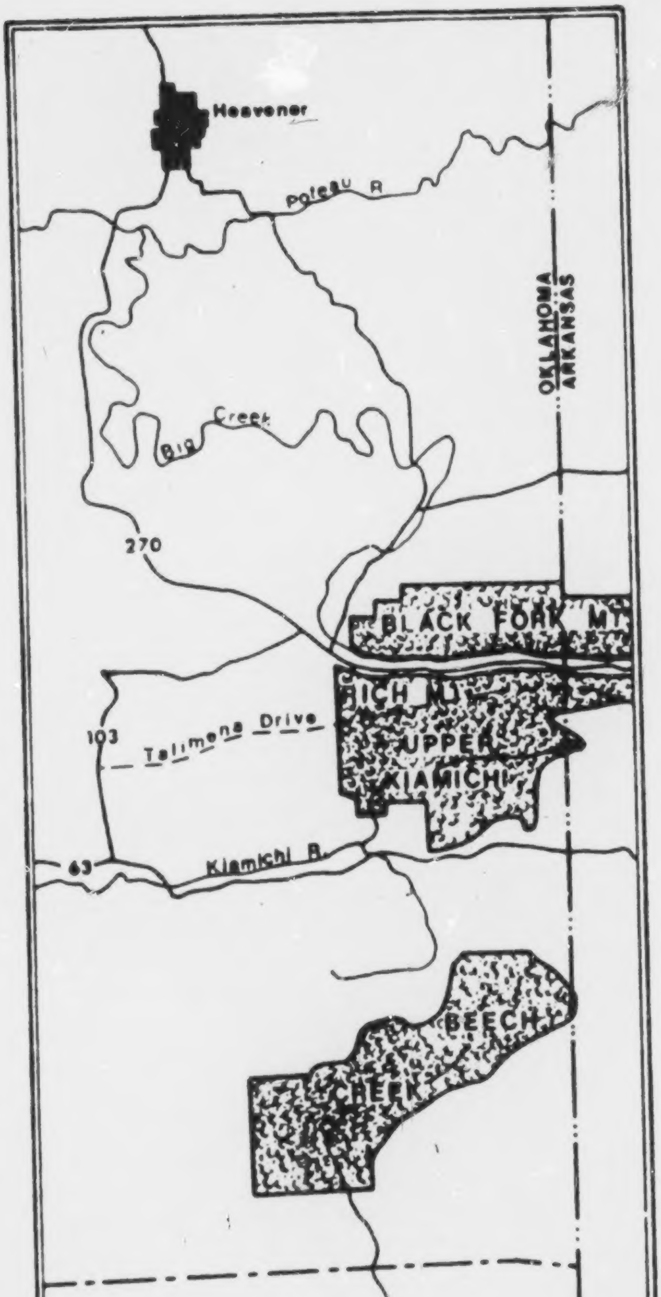
The United States was the first nation in the world to set aside wilderness areas for future generations. This policy was formalized in 1964 with the passage of the Wildernesss Act which established a national wilderness preservation system.

Wilderness areas are devoted to recreational and educational purposes. Pre-existing rights such as mining and mineral claims and access to private holdings remain the same. The law expressly forbids condemning private land to include in a wilderness area.

More Americans than ever are seeking refuge from our fast-paced society in the solitude of our great wilderness areas. Public demand for hunting, fishing, hiking and camping opportunities has created tremendous pressure on our wilderness areas.

Congress has directed our land management agencies to survey their lands and identify additional tracts which might be included in the national wilderness system. Land in Oklahoma could be designated wilderness areas for you and your children to enjoy.

The wilderness preservation program is our legacy to future generations. Through it, we ensure that our children can enjoy the same natural heritage we have cherished. Won't you help?


Heavener
Poteau R.
OKLAHOMA
ARKANSAS
Big Creek
270
BLACK FORK MT.
RICH MT.
103
Talimena Drive
UPPER
KIAMICHI
63
Kiamichi R.
BEECH
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Proposed Wilderness Area
miles
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WILDERNESS IN OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma has one wilderness area, the 8570 acre Charons Gardens in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge near Lawton. This area was designated by a bill introduced by the late Tom Steed in 1970. It is so heavily used that a waiting list exists for camping permits.

Recently, the U.S. Forest Service indentified four areas in the Ouachita National Forest for inclusion in the wilderness preservation system. These areas total about 26,000 acres and are all in LeFlore County. The proposed wilderness areas would provide quality hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and other recreational opportunities. These areas, starting with the northernmost area and proceeding south, are:

(1) Blackfork Mountain (5500 acres) - A rugged mountain ridge, 2400 feet high with a steep, cliff-like slope, Blackfork Mountain has numerous "rock glaciers" on its north slope. Much of the mountain is still covered with virgin forest. The area adjoins the proposed Blackfork Mountain Wilderness in Arkansas.

(2) Rich Mountain (4000 acres) - On the north side of Rich Mountain, this is a steep heavily forested area with a rich diversity of plant and animal species, some found nowhere else in the world. This area also extends into Arkansas.

(3) Upper Kiamichi River (9172 acres) - The Upper Kiamichi area includes portions of Rich Mountain and Pine Mountain with the headwaters of the Kiamichi River between the two. Seven miles of the Ouachita National Recreation Trail provide hiking and backpacking opportunities. Black bear and mountain lion have been sighted in this area which also provides prime habitat for eastern wild turkey.

(4) Beech Creek (8100 acres) - This unique ecosystem contains the complete watershed of Beech Creek, a beautiful, crystal-clear mountain stream, with waterfalls, natural dams and pools filled with smallmouth bass and other game fish. Many ancient tall beech trees line the stream.

These last remaining parcels of Oklahoma's natural heritage deserve to be preserved. Wilderness visitors could bring well over a million dollars per year to the local economy according to the OK Tourism & Recreation Department.

Congressional action can make these four areas part of the national wilderness preservation system. You can help!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Write your Congressmen and Senators. Only Congress can preserve wilderness. Tell them how you feel about wilderness preservation, why it is important to you or how you will use it. Write:

Senator David Boren
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Don Nickles
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Wes Watkins
Representative Glenn English
Representative Mickey Edwards
Representative Dave McCurdy
Representative Mike Synar
Representative James Jones
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

If you live in LeFlore County or other areas represented by Representative Watkins, your letters are especially important.

If you live in the vicinity of the four proposed wilderness areas, spread the word. Write letters to local newspapers. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Local support is important.

OKLAHOMA WILDERNESS COALITION

The Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition is an alliance of citizens and organizations working together to promote wilderness preservation in Oklahoma. The Coalition endorses designation of the four areas described inside as wilderness areas. Your ideas and help are welcomed and encouraged. Member groups are:

Arkansas Conservation Coalition
Central Oklahoma Audubon Society
Earth First!
Kiamichi Conservation Society
Oklahoma Chapter, American Fisheries Society
Oklahoma Ornithological Society
McCurtain Wilderness Society
Scenic Rivers Association of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club
Oklahoma State University Wildlife Society
Oklahoma Wildlife Federation
Oklahoma Wildlife Society
Oklahoma Wild Turkey Federation
Ozark Society
Tulsa Audubon Society

For more information, a slide show on the four proposed areas, speakers on wilderness preservation, or membership information write to: Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 60882, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73146.

Brochure funded by the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation

This document was sent to homes in LeFlore County.
We received 170-180 favorable responses, only 1 negative.

**LeFlore County
Wilderness Association**

Dear Friends:

The LeFlore County Wilderness Association was organized by a group of local residents concerned about the future of the National Forest lands in our county and what will happen to them. We have been working with other local and statewide conservation groups to preserve the last remaining wildlands in our state; 4 areas in the Ouachita National Forest known as Black Fork Mountain, Upper Kiamichi, Rich Mountain and Beech Creek. These efforts are finally coming together and 1985 promises to be the turning point in this struggle to save a part of our heritage. But we need your help. The Forest Service is now considering a plan for the Ouachita National Forest that will determine the management and use of these lands for the next 50 years, and includes their recommendations on wilderness. In addition, it is likely that our Congressman Wes Watkins will soon take a position on wilderness and introduce legislation in Washington to deal with the issue.

YOUR ACTIONS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS CAN MAKE THE CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE ! !

The Forest Service is required by law to consider the wishes and opinions of local residents in developing their plan. The Draft Plan under consideration can be changed in response to concerns and comments expressed by the public. We have prepared this review to help you form an opinion on the Forest Service Plan and let you know what we think about it. Your comments can influence what happens to the Forest lands which are so important to our county and the local economy.

TIME IS SHORT
COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE FOREST SERVICE BY JUNE 15

Congressman Watkins has a key role in the decisions on wilderness in Oklahoma. Whether or not the Forest Service changes its recommendations, they are still only that - recommendations. Congress will make the final decision and your requests and views will be considered at least as important as those of the Forest Service. Congressman Watkins is interested in your opinion. You can let him know what you think by sending a copy of your comments to his office or writing him a letter. Your input can help persuade him to ask Congress to act.

Here are the addresses:

Forest Supervisor
Ouachita National Forest
P.O. Box 1270
Hot Springs, AR 71902

Honorable Wes Watkins
US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

For more information about wilderness or to find out how you can help, please return the form below . Thanks for all you can do!

Sincerely,

Audrey Balentine, Chairman
LeFlore County Wilderness Association

(_) Yes! I want to help
Save Oklahoma Wilderness

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REVIEW OF THE OUACHITA FOREST PLAN

The Forest Service has released its Draft Management Plan for the Ouachita National Forest. The recommended plan, if implemented as is, would mean the permanent loss of 2 of 4 needed wilderness areas, massive clear-cutting of timber, aerial spraying and increased herbicide use on the forest, and lost wildlife habitat. The Forest Service will follow the final plan for the next 50 years. The law requires them to consider the views of the public in developing their plan. The Draft Plan can be changed if enough people express concerns about its recommendations.

Wilderness

The Draft Plan calls for Black Fork Mountain and Upper Kiamichi areas to be studied for wilderness while Rich Mountain and Beech Creek areas would be used for logging and other nonwilderness purposes. LeFlore County needs all 4 wilderness areas. Here's why:

* Wilderness is good for the local economy. Because of timber conditions and the small size of the areas, wilderness status would have negligible effects on timber production. But people visiting wilderness will pour over ONE MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR into the local economy according to research by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism & Recreation. Wilderness will not affect payments to schools and local government. These payments are based on the total Forest land in the county without considering wilderness status. Wilderness is an economic opportunity we can't afford to pass up.

* Wilderness will protect the Talimena Scenic Drive. Many people come here to visit the Scenic Drive each year. Rich Mountain and Upper Kiamichi areas border the Drive and Black Fork Mountain provides part of the spectacular scenery. If Rich Mountain isn't made wilderness, it will be clearcut, ruining the scenery along this 5 mile stretch of the Drive.

* Wilderness provides land for hunting, fishing, camping, riding, and hiking. Some of the best deer and turkey hunting to be found is in these areas, especially Beech Creek - which would be clearcut under the Forest Service plan.

* Our children need wilderness. We should protect this small part of the Forest in its natural state so that our children and their children will be able to see what the mountains were once like.

For these reasons, we support wilderness status for all 4 areas

Clearcutting

The recommended plan relies on clearcutting for virtually all timber harvesting. Other alternatives such as selective cutting are not even considered! Under the Forest Service plan, our forest would be turned into a tree farm at the rate of 20,000 acres per year. Clearcutting causes increased soil loss, decrease in diversity, and degraded wildlife habitat besides being downright ugly.

We believe selective cutting should be used as much as possible and clearcutting should be held to a minimum

Herbicide Use

Largely because of the exclusive use of clearcutting, the Forest Service is proposing a big increase in the acres treated with herbicides. These chemicals will end up in the water and animals in the area. Most chemicals would be applied by aerial spraying, which is not allowed now. Aerial spraying increases the risk of damage to adjoining property and the liklihood that non-target areas will be sprayed.

We believe herbicide use should be limited and strictly controlled and we oppose all aerial spraying of these chemicals on the forest

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Mr. WATKINS. In fact, Mr. Kelley, you might provide the information for us. I would like for the Forest Service to provide information on how the survey was made and where it was made and send a copy of the survey form that you used.

I also would like to have a copy, Audrey, of the letter or the survey from Le Flore County where 170 people responded. I would like for that to be made part of the record so we can have that additional information.

It is like Mr. Wood said a while ago when he said none of the four areas met the criteria. "None" is a very encompassing word. You are saying it is very clear that the people want the wilderness areas established.

The word "clear" gets muddied when I start looking at this whole thing. I would appreciate that information because we are trying to find a clearcut way to work something out.

Mr. BALLENTINE. Could I make one other statement?

Mr. WATKINS. Yes, Audrey.

Mr. BALLENTINE. We at the onset have tried to present the impact of wilderness and the laws and just the basic facts about wilderness from as factual a standpoint as we can. This petition that was mentioned before had 32 facts associated with it that was circulated by the Le Flore County Conservation District, and it was rife with statements that were not exactly in accordance with the law. I think there has been a lot of clouding of the issue here by misstatement of fact.

And I would like that to be a part of the record, that we have attempted to state the facts so that the people would be as well informed as possible.

Mr. Wood referred to the tourism report as baloney, and that also, I think, would apply in some of the other things that have been put out here about wilderness areas, and I would hope that our people would make their mind up based on the facts.

Mr. WHITLEY. The subcommittee would appreciate copies of whatever questions and surveys were used and we would also realize that when persons are asked to sign petitions, they don't necessarily read what is on the petition——

Mr. BALLENTINE. That is right.

Mr. WHITLEY. And the wording of the survey is not necessarily determinative. I don't mean by any means to discount petitions at all, or that our committee will disregard them, but we do understand that the manner in which this kind of a question is presented may evoke different responses from the same group in which the question was presented.

Mr. WATKINS. Very good.

Mr. BALLENTINE. Thank you, sir, I appreciate it.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. Ballentine.

Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Tom Creider, who is director, division of planning and development, Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation from Oklahoma City. We are glad to have you with us, Mr. Creider. I think we have a copy of your prepared statement, and we will receive it in full for the record, and you may proceed, sir.

STATEMENT OF TOM CREIDER, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND RECREATION

Mr. CREIDER. Thank you very much.

I would first like to say that on behalf of the executive director of the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, apologize for his not being present this morning, so I am sitting in for him.

I am Tom Creider of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and am representing Mr. Abe Hesser. I am division director of our planning and development division.

The following comments represent the views of the department and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission regarding the proposed wilderness areas within the Ouachita National Forest.

In response to what kind of recreational demand can be expected for wilderness in Oklahoma, the 1985 Statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan conducted telephone survey consisting of 1,400 in-State stratified random sample which was conducted by the Center for Economic and Management Research under the guidance of Dr. Neil Dikeman, associate director, University of Oklahoma.

The size of the sample was chosen based upon a confidence interval of 95 percent and a sampling error of approximately plus or minus 5 percent. The sample was stratified by county according to population with no county having less than 10 respondents.

Data originating from this survey indicates that 10.7 percent of Oklahoma's households participated in backpacking/camping activities in primitive areas this past year. The SCORP survey also indicated that 22.1 percent of Oklahomans enjoy dayhiking, 7.9 percent participate in nature photography, 50.6 percent fish, 24.3 percent hunt, and 21.8 percent participate in horseback riding. All these activities are permissible in wilderness designation and serves as an indication of the multiple and active use of wilderness land.

The State of Arkansas in 1984 projected a 15-percent increase in visitation and participation in wilderness recreation as a result of RARE II wilderness designation.

In response to what kind of economic impact will this kind of use result in, results from the 1985 SCORP telephone survey found the average expenditure for each trip whose purpose was to participate in backpacking/camping in primitive areas to be $83.41 per trip. I stated before that 10.7 percent of Oklahoma's households participate in backpacking/camping in primitive areas. Using 1984 estimates of number of households in Oklahoma, there are then 134,689 households in Oklahoma that participate in some form of backpacking/camping in primitive areas at least once a year.

With a conservative estimate that only 25 percent of these households visit a wilderness area a year in Oklahoma, the total annual economic impact from backpackers and campers of primitive areas alone would be $2.8 million.

In response to the question does the department see any other benefits coming from these areas being designated as wilderness, a research document completed by our National Heritage Program staff titled "Significant National Features of Rich Mountain and

Black Fork Mountain, Ouachita National Forest," stated that the unique environment of these proposed wilderness areas are distinguished by the presence of not only species of plants and animals native to the Ouachita Mountains, but also by the presence of several species known only to occur inside these boundaries.

Outstanding examples of mesophytic oak-hickory forest, and American beech forest are found nowhere else in the State. As the headwaters of the Kiamichi River, these areas support exceptionally diverse molluscan fauna downstream, including two species under review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In closing: Wilderness in Oklahoma has a positive growth potential. The lack of sufficient areas available for a self-guided or overnight wilderness experience sends millions of dollars in travel and tourism out of State. The physical character of the proposed wilderness areas which have deterred commercial use in the past is the most cherished and prized asset for wilderness designation.

While these areas should become designated wilderness on physical and preservation issues alone, they also can meet the most critical cost-effective analysis with positive results.

Based on the recommendation of the Oklahoma Trails Advisory Council, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission on April 22, 1982, went on record as supporting the designation of wilderness areas within the Ouachita National Forest. We urge Congressman Watkins to add his support to the designation of these wilderness areas.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Creider appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. Whitley. Thank you, Mr. Creider.

It is not completely clear to me from your testimony whether the State's division of planning and development of the Department of Tourism and Recreation is supporting all four of the areas which were originally recommended for wilderness in the roadless area review or whether you would perhaps narrow your recommendation to the two that the Forest Service now recommends.

Would you comment on that?

Mr. Creider. On record, we are in support of the two recently recommended by the U.S. Forest Service. We feel that all four definitely deserve serious consideration, but on record it would be the Upper Kiamichi and Black Fork Mountain.

Mr. Whitley. Black Fork Mountain and Upper Kiamichi is your recommendation at the present time?

Mr. Creider. Yes, sir.

Mr. Whitley. One other question. Again we would like to see a copy of the questionnaire that you mentioned, which questions were posed.

Mr. Creider. Yes, sir.

Mr. Whitley. It is really surprising to me that over 10 percent of Oklahoma households, according to your survey, have people who have been involved in backpacking and that sort of activity in wilderness areas. That is a high percentage. It wouldn't be nearly that high in my State. I don't question your findings, but again that is a high percentage.

Mr. Creider. I understand.

Mr. Watkins. I would like to say to the chairman, it might have been a mistake, I don't know how it is worded, because it says "in primitive areas."

Mr. Creider. Right.

Mr. Watkins. Some of us think it is kind of primitive in downtown Oklahoma City. They have a lot of things that we don't have down here.

Mr. Creider. Campsites that aren't improved.

Mr. Whitley. We are wondering how we can find a primitive area.

Mr. Watkins. Right, right now.

You mentioned Arkansas and a couple of other areas, and I will be definitely looking into Arkansas' activities and their facts and figures, and also visiting with their officials.

I have noted that there has been quite an emphasis on the fact that millions might be brought in by tourism.

Is that a guarantee?

Mr. Creider. A guarantee? It is a partnership, I think. It is a partnership of both local and State interests working to make that happen.

Mr. Watkins. One of the key things that I must try to make clear in my mind as I work through this thing is will there be a loss of income to a low income area of the State.

Mr. Creider. I understand.

Mr. Watkins. Because we cannot hardly lose any more.

Mr. Creider. I understand.

Mr. Watkins. And if there is a loss, then it is going to be a large factor on the negative side. And what I am trying to do is find some way that we might make up the lost revenue. If the State is willing to allocate more money from the Tourism and Recreation Department to this county and to these school districts, that might offset the loss.

I will be very honest, I don't know what the financial impact will be. But I don't want to shortchange our people in this area of the State of Oklahoma. I want to try to find the best answer possible for our people. And I would like to look at this study because, like the chairman, I was a little amazed at the 10.7-percent figure for backpackers.

Mr. Creider. Yes, sir.

Mr. Watkins. Thank you, and I hope you will tell Mr. Hesser that I wish he would have come down here and left a little money with us.

Mr. Whitley. Thank you, Mr. Creider.

Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Rick Jameson, who is executive director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation in Oklahoma City.

Mr. Jameson, I see you also have here with you today Mr. Odie Haley, who is the president of the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation. Mr. Haley, if you like, you may come forward and sit with Mr. Jameson as he testifies.

We are glad to hear from you at this time, Mr. Jameson.

STATEMENT OF RICK JAMESON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION, ACCOMPANIED BY ODIE HALEY, PRESIDENT, AND DON COX, REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. JAMESON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Watkins. If I might, I would also like to introduce our southwest regional vice president, Mr. Don Cox, who is from Mount Hermon.

The Oklahoma Wildlife Federation is extremely pleased to participate in today's wilderness hearing. The following statement is made on behalf of our 11,000 members statewide and 41 affiliated clubs. Many of these members reside in southeast Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Wildlife Federation, a nonprofit conservation group, is the State affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, and is made up of fishermen, hunters, campers, hikers, birdwatchers, and other conservationists from across the State.

My name is Rick Jameson. I am the executive director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation.

Through our 36-year history, we have strived to provide a clean environment and quality outdoor recreation for all Oklahomans to enjoy. We are a strong advocate for designating 26,000 acres, that is, all four of the proposed areas of the Ouachita National Forest as wilderness areas and are happy to see that Congress may be moving toward giving us some wilderness.

The setting aside of some wilderness needs to happen so on because much of southeastrn Oklahoma has been radically changed in the last century, particularly in the last two decades.

The State's population has grown from 2 million to 3.2 million residents from 1970 until today. It is expected to grow to some 4 million by the fast approaching year of 2000.

This growth has spurred much development and increased usage and pressure on our eastern Oklahoma forests. Large-scale clearcutting has converted much of our mixed pine-hardwood forests to pine plantations. Forestry roads have literally crisscrossed every section of land and every mountainside in southeast Oklahoma.

This has increased wildlife poaching and added tons of mud to our smallmouth bass streams. Increased herbicide usage to control hardwoods, a part of today's intensive forestry, both on and off the national forests, has changed the ecology of Oklahoma's woodlands. Thousands of acres of native forest have also been cleared and coverted to cattle pastures.

The chance to truly get away from the hustles and stresses of the modern society is rare in Oklahoma. Roadless areas in this part of the State have become the exception—a very rare exception—rather than the rule.

Many of our members and supporters enjoy the opportunity to visit undisturbed forestlands for backpacking, wildlife observation, looking at wildflowers, hunting, fishing, trapping, all those outdoor pursuits.

Above all, Mr. Chairman, they want their children and their grandchildren to have the same opportunity to choose this form of recreation. Without wilderness designation, there will be no choice for them.

We are asking the Congress to save a small part of our State from the encroachment of commercial activities. These four areas and 26,000 acres represent only one-half of 1 percent of the available timber-producing acres in southeastern Oklahoma. The State forestry division estimates there are about 5 million acres in this State that are available for commercial forestry. Thus, there will remain nearly 5 million acres of potential commercial timber areas for nonwilderness development.

For these reasons, we would like to go on record as supporting the proposed wilderness designation in Le Flore County, specifically the Beach Creek, the Upper Kiamichi River, the Black Fork Mountain area and Rich Mountain.

The Oklahoma Wildlife Federation recently surveyed over 50,000 Oklahomans on this subject. Support was overwhelming for protecting the 26,000 acres through wilderness designation. By a 14-to-1 ratio, respondents favored the idea.

I have enclosed a copy of the survey results, and that is also the survey instrument that is attached to this statement, for the committee's review.

As a little bit of background, those are sportsmen's lists, that is Outdoor Life and Field & Stream and our State wildlife magazine from across Oklahoma.

Mr. WHITLEY. You surveyed subscribers to those publications?

Mr. JAMESON. Yes; those are magazine subscribers, random survey across the State.

Mr. WHITLEY. Well, wait a minute. Was it a random survey or was it a survey of those magazine subscribers?

Mr. JAMESON. Of those magazine subscribers, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. OK. Go ahead.

Mr. JAMESON. The results of this survey are similar to what the Forest Service found in polling public opinion on this, and it is not surprising, Congressman, for Oklahoma is a State extremely poor in public lands. Some 95 percent of this State is in private ownership. Less than 3 percent is available for public recreation.

Our parks and wildlife areas are overrun by Oklahomans and out-of-State visitors seeking places to camp, hunt, fish, and enjoy nature. Far too often, tragically, Congressman Watkins, they go to Arkansas, Missouri, Colorado, and New Mexico to seek wilderness, and also to spend their money.

We can't come to you with a wilderness proposal like Arkansas and Texas for areas of 100,000 acres or more. And we certainly aren't asking for 26,000 acres in hopes of getting a compromise area of 10,000 to 15,000 acres. Nor is this a foot in the door proposal where first we will ask for 26,000 acres and then later want to expand it to 50,000 or 100,000 acres; 26,000 acres is the entire amount identified by the Forest Service as possibly suitable for wilderness under the Federal Wilderness Act. There is no more.

We have no hidden agenda on this. This is all that is left in Oklahoma. We need to act now to save it.

We have nothing to compromise and we have precious little time to wait. Either we set aside these last remaining remnants of eastern Oklahoma forest or we have lost the opportunity to preserve this part of our natural heritage forever.

From another standpoint, we feel that wilderness designation would prove to be an economic plus for the local economy and for the State overall. The tourism department has told us the wilderness designation can bring in some $2.8 million a year to our economy. We feel that these figures can be conservative, since recreationists in this part of the United States have very few wilderness opportunities.

Congressman Watkins has repeatedly exhibited a desire to use his district's excellent natural resources to the betterment of the local economy. Wilderness designation of at least 26,000 acres of the Ouachita National Forest will be a win/win situation for conservationists and for the Congressman's desire to foster economic growth.

Oklahoma's two mainstay industries, oil and agriculture, are in big trouble. We would be wise to ensure quality recreation areas for our developing tourism industry. Building this underdeveloped industry is the kind of economic diversity that Oklahoma sorely needs.

Another plus is that it is a good, clean industry. It brings no smokestacks, no chemical spills, no radiation, nothing but dollars and visitors.

We have heard by some that this proposal might result in the loss of jobs and income to Le Flore County. Such claims are unwarranted. I think Mr. Ballentine spoke very clearly to that issue.

The proposed area s represent some of the poorest timber, from a commercial standpoint, and are insignificant in the Forest Service's timber management plans. In fact, these areas are generally steep sloped, rocky, and [illegible] merchantable timber.

Local school districts [illegible] to receive their economic benefits from the economic [illegible] off the rest of the Ouachita National Forest.

Some think that hunting and camping will be prohibited, which, of course, is without foundation. This will provide quality hunting without the disturbance of vehicles. Camping will continue to be permitted in these areas, and of course there are several Forest Service developed campgrounds near the proposed wilderness areas that will serve those who want those types of facilities.

Rather than deny opportunity, the wilderness designation will preserve the outstanding scenery that draws many people to take a drive on the Talimena Drive and other highways that bring tourists to view the Kiamichi Mountains.

It has also been incorrectly stated that wilderness designation would mean condemnation of thousands of acres of private land. And I refer to an earlier newspaper article and statement in the Poteau News Sun.

The wilderness designation only involves changing the designation of existing Forest Service land and requires not 1 acre of condemnation. The Forest Service has no such authority to take land without just compensation.

It has been said that a tract of land in McCurtain County, the McCurtain County wilderness area, serves the needs of wilderness advocates and thus we need no additional areas. This McCurtain County area is not part of the National Wilderness System. It does not allow camping or hunting, nor does it provide any appreciable recreation. The State Wildlife Department, which controls it, uses it mainly for scientific research.

The wilderness proposal has been criticized because some say it would decrease wildlife and wildlife management. This might be a problem if we were talking about hundreds of thousands of acres, but we are talking about four relatively small tracts.

Much of the wildlife in these areas can and will use adjacent areas. It is really only a matter of balances. While nonmanaged wilderness would make up approximately 10 percent of the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma, the other 90 percent is available for wildlife food plots, timber harvest, modern developed campgrounds, and other uses.

Species that benefit from young forests and timber harvest have most of the national forest and most of the rest of eastern Oklahoma. Species that benefit from mature forests will benefit from wilderness. The wilderness area wildlife and hunters will benefit by enjoying protection from poaching and disturbance from vehicles.

It should be noted that the Oklahoma State Department of Wildlife Conservation supports this proposal as does the Oklahoma Wild Turkey Federation and other hunting groups in this State.

In summary, we wish to thank you for holding this wilderness hearing in Oklahoma. We believe establishing a 26,000-acre wilderness would be of great benefit to Le Flore County, OK, and to this region.

We encourage Congress to act now to preserve this small remnant of natural Oklahoma forest land. And while our main interest is a belief that it is wise and proper to preserve representative natural areas and to provide quality wilderness recreation for present and future generations, it is also our belief that establishing a wilderness area in Oklahoma will complement a growing Oklahoma tourism economy that presently lacks a significant wilderness area.

Thank you for considering our comments. We will look forward to working with your committee, Congressman Watkins, in advancing a wilderness proposal for this State.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jameson appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. Jameson, for a very comprehensive statement on behalf of the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation.

Mr. Haley, would you like to add any comments to this?

Mr. HALEY. Yes, sir, I would.

I would like to echo what Rick said. He is a very eloquent speaker. There have been several eloquent speakers here today from both sides.

Coming from Broken Bow, OK, which is just over the Kiamichi Mountain area here about 100 miles, and living with the Weyerhaeuser Co. that owns almost 1 million acres there and living with the clearcut areas and seeing the changes that have taken place both here and there, it has always been important to me to know that the national forest is up here because we will run out of the timber out here one of these days, so we will always be able to come over the mountain and find a place that we can get away to.

Also, since both of you gentlemen referred to the newspaper story in the Broken Bow News, I would like to make a comment on that, if I may.

In the reporters' statement that this was a cut-and-dried meeting, since my picture adorned that story, I would like to assure you gentlemen that that statement did not come from me. I don't know who he talked to or where he got it.

Jim McCain, the writer, came to see me about getting his drain fixed. That is what he talked to me about mostly. And I did not make the statement.

I will assure you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Watkins, that we appreciate the opportunity to get to sit in a congressional hearing on this issue.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much.

Mr. Watkins.

Mr. **Watkins**. Yes, Mr. Jameson, and Odie, I appreciate you both attending, and I want to assure you I do plead guilty that I do have a concern about the betterment of the local economy and jobs for the State of Oklahoma, and when we look at the economic development, I would like to make it in as broad a context as possible.

That is why I have tried to keep an open mind about what can be done to improve the tourism and recreation, and if it includes wilderness, we want to take a good, hard look at that.

So I do plead guilty to that statement you have in there. I would like to ask for a little more support from your group. It seems like every time I work on economic development, I always have to carry an extra load because your group seems to be against a lot of the economic development in our area of the State.

I don't know where to find something along the way that you might feel differently about, because it seems like on nearly every occasion—but not just this one but on many others—you object. I think I have had more of an openmindedness than some of the individuals in your group have had.

You have indicated in your statement that the State of Oklahoma has increased population and that you need places. If you look at the facts, this county has lost over 50 percent of its people. They have left in the search of jobs. Over 50 percent of the people in McCurtain County have left in the search for a job in the last 40 years.

One thing we have got to do is try to provide job opportunities in our area of the State of Oklahoma, or all those people will be in urban, metropolitan centers and they will want a weekend or two when they can come down to this area. And I would like for them to come and be here, but I do want our people in this part of the State to be able to have jobs in this area.

Odie, I think you want to make a comment.

Mr. **Haley**. Yes, Mr. Watkins. Just in response, you know, we don't see eye to eye on everything. That is obvious. But there is more than one way to skin a cat.

We are interested in economic development, too. There are more ways to develop an area economically than some of the ways, some of the things you propose. We don't have the platform that you have and the resources you have. But we feel obliged to state our case when we have to.

Mr. **Watkins**. I appreciate that. Let me quickly add, I would appreciate your group listing as many of those different ways for economic development that you think would make job opportunities for our people. I can assure you that I will not take that lightly.

Mr. **Haley**. We have given you a few examples in the recent past of how some of those economy things develop.

Also, your statement that 50 percent of the people in McCurtain County have left. I think if you will read the Red River Basin study, you will find that since 1968, there has been a new influx of people into southeast Oklahoma.

Mr. **Watkins**. That is true. But since 1930, many of our loved ones have left. Since 1968 some job opportunities have developed and our population has started to increase.

Mr. **Haley**. But we do appreciate compromise. Let me assure you that the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation, we have to work to make a living, too. We are not all urbane intellectuals like we are called.

I am an appliance dealer in southeast Oklahoma. If people don't come in and buy appliances from me, I don't have a job. I wouldn't do anything to hurt my business. I think anything I have done has helped by business through the federation.

All of us, the people here today from the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation, all of them except Mr. Jameson and one other person, I believe, David Srauss, take time off away from their work to come up here and speak to you gentlemen. And that is the time we are just losing money.

But we believe in what we are doing. It is not because we have got a personal vendetta or a grudge. We believe in what we are doing.

Mr. **Watkins**. I can assure you I appreciate that, and let me say my net worth today is less than what it was the day I went to Congress, too, by far.

We have the most beautiful area in the State of Oklahoma. We have opportunities here that a lot of people have never discovered, and I think we have belts of areas that can be developed, and other areas that we can have for the fishing, hunting, and wildlife. All of these things can help us grow.

Let me ask you a quick question on the national forest in Oklahoma. How much of that has been clearcut in the past? Does anyone in your group have that information or do I need to ask Mr. Kelley to provide that information for the record?

Mr. **Kelley**. I will provide that and other requested material for the record.

Mr. **Watkins**. Because clearcutting does concern me, and I would like to have that information.

[The information follows:]

ROADLESS AREAS - OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST, OKLAHOMA

(January 28, 1986)

A hearing was conducted January 7, 1986, in Poteau, Oklahoma, by the Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms and Energy, Committee on Agriculture regarding roadless areas in Oklahoma that may be considered for wilderness designation. Four areas - Blackfork Mountain, Upper Kiamichi River, Rich Mountain and Beech Creek, - were the focus of this meeting. During this hearing requests were made to provide additional information for areas that may be considered in future legislation. These requests included information about:

A. Acres included in the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) and the Roadless Area Reevaluation

B. How Public Participation Was Conducted

C. Socio-Economic Analysis

D. Timber Resource Situation

E. Development Activities

F. Miles of Existing Road

G. Mineral Leases, Applications, Outstanding Rights

H. Ten-year Timber Sale Action Plan

A. ROADLESS AREA ACRES

Table 1. RARE II Recommended and Reevaluation Roadless Areas (Acres)

AREA	TOTAL RARE II	ROADLESS AREA REEVALUATION TOTAL	NF	PVT
Black Fork Mountain	5,500	4,752	4,072	680
Upper Kiamichi River	10,090	10,090	8,852	1,238
Rich Mountain	5,800	5,215	5,060	155
Beech Creek	11,400	11,225	8,065	3,160

During the reevaluation technical corrections to boundaries to make areas more manageable as wilderness and acreages were recalculated. This resulted in the acreage differences between RARE II and reevaluation.

B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WILDERNESS STUDIES

In the 1978 RARE II, Black Fork Mountain and Upper Kiamichi River roadless areas were recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Rich Mountain and Beech Creek were returned to nonwilderness uses. Table 2 shows the RARE II public response.

Table 2. Public Response to the 1978 Roadless Area Review and Evaluation

Area		For Wilderness		For Nonwilderness		For Further Planning	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blackfork Mountain	Responses	281	75.8	89	24.0	1	0.3
	Signatures	905	90.5	94	9.4	1	0.1
Upper Kiamichi River	Responses	282	76.7	85	23.1	1	0.3
	Signatures	905	88.7	114	11.2	1	0.1
Rich Mountain	Responses	199	67.0	96	32.3	2	0.7
	Signatures	211	66.8	163	32.6	2	0.6
Beech Creek	Responses	181	61.2	51	17.2	64	21.6
	Signatures	193	20.4	18	18.3	674	71.3

In October 1982, a California circuit court affirmed the RARE II environmental statement was inadequate as to the nonwilderness designation of 46 roadless areas in California. Due to this ruling, all RARE II areas in Oklahoma were reevaluated.

On August 15, 1983, the Ouachita National Forest issued a bulletin describing the areas involved, procedures for public participation, and proposed boundary changes or inventory deletions. This bulletin was distributed to government agencies, groups and individuals involved in the previous RARE II process. A press release was sent to news media notifying the general public of the reevaluation and inviting their participation.

On November 7, 1983, a bulletin was issued describing roadless areas on the Ouachita National Forest for reevaluation. The Oklahoma areas of Blackfork Mountain, Upper Kiamichi River, Rich Mountain and Beech Creek were included. All areas met Inventory and Evaluation Criteria.

The majority of wilderness reevaluation responses were received by December 16, 1983. Table 3 shows the reevaluation public response.

Table 3. Public Response to the 1983 Roadless Area Reevaluation

Area		For Wilderness		For Nonwilderness		For Further Planning	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blackfork Mountain	Responses	31	77.5	7	17.5	2	5.0
	Signatures	53	84.1	8	12.7	2	3.2
Upper Kiamichi River	Responses	34	79.1	8	18.6	1	2.3
	Signatures	57	66.3	28	32.5	1	1.2
Rich Mountain	Responses	32	80.0	8	20.3	0	0
	Signatures	54	85.7	9	14.3	0	0
Beech Creek	Responses	30	81.1	7	18.9	0	0
	Signatures	52	86.7	8	13.3	0	0

C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In the RARE II process an input-output analysis was used to quantify the economic impacts. These quantified effects were used as indicators of the economic processes and relationships which might be expected from changes in resource and activity outputs.

The analysis indicated that the economic impacts of all the alternatives and of allocations to wilderness, further planning-wilderness, and further planning-non-wilderness are minor for the impact areas of the Ouachita National Forest. No significant change in employment would result from designating all roadless areas as wilderness. All changes in employment were estimated at less than one percent.

During preparation of the Forest Plan effects of the alternatives on employment, population and personal income in the Forest's influence area were estimated by using an input-output analysis model called IMPLAN. This type of analysis is a widely accepted approach to determine short-term effects of various alternatives on a regional economy.

Direct impacts include income produced by industries or individuals that deal directly with forest outputs, such as sawtimber and pulpwood mills, and loggers.

Indirect impacts come from support industries such as gas and oil companies which supply energy.

Induced impacts result from employees and owners of directly or indirectly impacted areas spending their income within the economic region.

Economic effects of the alternatives within the 14-county area are primarily a function of timber production and processing. Other activities, however, such as recreation use, grazing, road construction and reconstruction, and wildlife have a definite impact on the economy and employment levels of the Forest influence zone.

Table 4 compares estimated changes in employment, population and income for the Proposed Forest Plan and the current situation. The data in Table 4 represents the total estimated change resulting from all management activities Forestwide; change because of wilderness designation is only a small part of this and statistically cannot be accurately separated. This data does not include information related to other sectors of the economy.

Table 4. Estimated Change in Employment, Population and Income in the Fourteen-County Area From All National Forest Management Activities

Effect	Unit	Current Situation	Proposed Forest Plan
Direct:			
Employment	Persons	10,095	11,280
Population	Persons	35,750	39,943
Income	Million Dollars	98	111
Indirect:			
Employment	Persons	4,167	4,626
Population	Persons	14,758	16,380
Income	Million Dollars	45	50
Induced:			
Employment	Persons	8,793	9,806
Population	Persons	31,139	34,723
Income	Million Dollars	79	89
Total:			
Employment	Persons	23,057	25,712
Population	Persons	81,646	91,046
Income	Million Dollars	223	250

D. TIMBER RESOURCE SITUATION

Table 5. Acres by Forest Type and Productivity Class

Area	Annual Cu.Ft. Growth/Acre	NF Acres	Pine	Mixed Pine Hardwood	Mixed Hardwood	Non-Stocked
Black Fork Mountain	50-85	1,455	1,327	128	-	-
	20-50	2,617	179	260	2,178	1*
	Total	4,072	1,506	388	2,178	1
Upper Kiamichi River	50-85	4,715	4,414	-	301	-
	20-50	4,137	550	-	3,521	66*
	Total	8,852	4,964	-	3,822	66
Rich Mountain	20-50	5,060	535	343	4,069	113
	Total	5,060	535	343	4,069	113
Beech Creek	85-120	373	373	-	-	-
	50-85	797	797	-	-	-
	20-50	6,805	860	1,697	4,248	-
	Total	8,065	2,030	1,697	4,248	-

*Noncommercial Forest

Table 6. Stand Condition Class and Volume

Area	Acres by Stand Condition Class				Total Volume MMBF		
	Saw Timber	Pole Timber	Seedling & Sapling	Non-Stocked	Pine	Hardwood	Total
Black Fork Mountain	1,503	2,105	463	1	18.6	11.7	30.3
Upper Kiamichi River	4,764	2,885	1,140	64	25.8	23.8	49.6
Rich Mountain	2,606	2,300	41	113	5.7	30.3	36.0
Beech Creek	4,995	2,980	-	-	21.7	34.0	55.7

E. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN OKLAHOMA ROADLESS AREAS

Table 7. Development Activities in Oklahoma Roadless Areas

RARE II NAME	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	FY	STAGE DEVELOPMENT	COMMENTS	ACRES
Black Fork Mountain	None				
Upper Kiamichi River	None				
Rich Mountain	Reforestation	84	Direct Seeding	Compts. 73 1/	20
Beech Creek	Habitat Improvement Wildlife	80	Completed	Compt. 268, 270, 271, 273 W/L Ponds	13
		83	Completed	Compt. 268 Overstory Wildlife Stand Improvement	32
	Road Construction	83	Completed	Compt. 268, Rd. K68A (1.5 mi.)	5
	Timber Sale	84	Sale Awarded 2/28/83 Terminated 7/31/85	Compt. 268 Stds. 8, 14, 16 2/	128
	Timber Sale	83	Sale completed 3/84	Compt. 73	55

1/ Timber was sold after nonwilderness designation in the RARE II process.

2/ Defaulted timber sale; 55 acres harvested in stand 16. Beech Creek was not recommended for wilderness in RARE II. After the timber was sold, the Sierra Club requested a delay of any further work until legislation is passed. No resale is planned until a decision is made on wilderness designation or the Forest Plan is implemented.

F. MILES OF EXISTING ROAD IN OKLAHOMA ROADLESS AREAS

Table 8. Miles of Existing Road in Oklahoma Roadless Areas

Area	All Weather	Primitive
Black Fork Mountain	0	0
Upper Kiamichi River	2.0	9.7
Rich Mountain	0	0
Beech Creek	3.1	9.1

G. MINERALS LEASES, APPLICATIONS, OUTSTANDING RIGHTS

Table 9. Minerals Leases, Applications, Outstanding Rights (as of January 10, 1986)

	Blk Fk Mtn (4073 Ac)	Rich Mtn (5060 Ac)	Up Kia Riv (8852 Ac)	Beech Crk (7975 Ac)
[1] OS&R Rights: Acres	120	1510	290	1320
[2] Leased: Acres	700	4520	0	90
No. of Leases	1	8	0	1
[3] Lease Applications Acres	2472	360	8720	6000
No.of Applications	9	6	16	4
[4] TOTAL (Lease + Application) Acres	3172	4880	8720	6090
No. of Leases + Applications	10	14	16	5

1. OS&R Rights: Outstanding and Reserved Mineral Rights; Lands where the US Government has no or only partial mineral interest. Leases and Applications for Lease have been made in almost all OS&R Rights cases where the US has at least partial mineral interest.

2. Leased: Acres of land presently under mineral leases, and the number of leases, in each of the four Oklahoma Proposed Roadless Areas.

3. Lease Applications: Acres of land presently under Applicaltions for mineral leases, and the number of Applications, in each of the four Oklahoma Proposed Roadless Areas.

4. TOTAL: The total acres and numbers reported in rows 2 and 3.

H. TEN-YEAR TIMBER SALE ACTION PLAN

Table 10. Ten-Year Timber Sale Action Plan (Ref. Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan

SALE	ACRES	TOTAL VOLUME		MILES OF ROAD LOCAL		TYPE OF	FISCAL
#	PINE	IN MCF	IN MBF	CONST.	RECON.	HARVEST	YEAR
Black Fork Mountain - Choctaw Ranger District: None							
Upper Kiamichi River - Kiamichi Ranger District: None							
Rich Mountain - Choctaw Ranger District:							
72	74	137	643	0.8	0.0	Clearcut	88
73	56	104	486	0.5	0.0	Clearcut	88
74	79	142	670	0.6	0.1	Clearcut	92
Total	209	383	1,799	1.9	0.1		
Beech Creek - Kiamichi Ranger District:							
268	80	147	680	0.4	0.0	Clearcut	91
270	123	222	1,027	0.8	0.2	Clearcut	95
271	57	103	476	0.4	0.0	Clearcut	95
272	50	90	418	0.4	0.0	Clearcut	95
273	37	67	310	0.3	0.0	Clearcut	95
Total	347	629	3,911	2.3	0.2		

Mr. **Watkins**. Also, Rick, I notice you said we have nothing to compromise. I think my chairman here can tell you that basically all legislation is worked out through compromise and trying to reach a consensus.

I appreciate people who have a rigid position on one side or the other. I always tell them I wish I had a far rightwing or a far leftwing philosophy, because they have their mind made up. When you are in the middle trying to find justice for everyone, you have a nagging, churning of your stomach trying to find the best decision. Sometimes I wish I was one of those individuals that had their mind made up when they walked in.

But we are going to be trying to find the best solution and, generally speaking, that will probably be some type of compromise.

Mr. **Jameson**. Perhaps that is a poor choice of words. What I have tried to get across, Congressman Watkins, is that some people when they come before a committee or come forth with a proposal actually do ask for 100 so they can get 50 or they will ask for 26 so they can get 10 or 15. We are not playing any games. We are not taking that tack. We are being modest and forthright.

We feel like that is all that is left in Oklahoma. We don't have hundreds of thousands of acres of public land, large wilderness tracts to propose. We have nothing left but a small remnant of eastern Oklahoma forest left.

So we are not pulling any punches. We are not playing any games with figures. We have looked at the evidence. There are 26,000 acres only remaining, and that is our position and we didn't come forth asking for 26 hoping to get 10.

We really sincerely believe that all 26,000 acres ought to be preserved. That is all that is left. Out of 5 million acres of eastern Oklahoma forests, there are 26,000 acres, one-half of 1 percent is all we ask for.

So I was trying to emphasize that, but I don't want to appear that we are rigid and uncompromising. We understand the position you are in and we understand politics. But we are trying to be honest and lay our position on the table as forthrightly as possible.

Mr. **Watkins**. And I appreciate that. I appreciate the position you have got to come from and the position of your organization.

Sometimes there will be conflicts when we try to build jobs, and build an economic base in our area and support our schools, but we are always searching to find the best compromise for a lot of those things along the way. And I that is why I wanted to say, things are not cut and dried.

Mr. **Jameson**. We have an honest relationship going here, Mr. Congressman.

Mr. **Watkins**. I would just like to request a little more openmindedness on the other side of the coin, as we go about trying to do a job to serve the people in this area of the State.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me that opportunity.

Mr. **Whitley**. Let me just make one more comment to Mr. Jameson and Mr. Haley here.

I am interested in the survey that used a subscription list to Field & Stream and Outdoor Life and the State wildlife publication. Let me say if you had made that survey in North Carolina, you would have found my name on that list twice. I subscribe to

Field & Stream and also to North Carolina Wildlife magazine, which, by the way, is a most excellent publication. I don't know if you folks have access to our magazine or not, but if you don't, you ought to look at it.

Mr. JAMESON. I do, and that is a fine publication. You have got a fine fish and game department out there; one of the best in the Nation.

Mr. WHITLEY. We are proud of them, and let me say that as a hunter and fisherman of long standing, I just want you to know that I am not at all immune to what you are saying and the work that your organization does.

I have a very high regard for the National Wildlife Federation and the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. The organization does a very outstanding job, and I commend you folks for what you are trying to do here in Oklahoma.

Mr. JAMESON. Thank you very much.

Mr. HALEY. Thank you.

Mr. WHITLEY. Our next scheduled witness is Mr. Gene White, who is a lumber industry representative from Heavener, OK.

Mr. WATKINS. Le Flore County is about as close to Heavener as you can get.

I might say, Mr. Chairman, while Mr. White is coming forward, I had a very unusual experience in Le Flore County, and I think all of you will appreciate this. I was in the cloakroom right off the floor of the House back about a year ago when I got a call from a young sergeant who had been through this part of the country, and he had car trouble down in what he calls Heavener, OK, and he says, "Heavener is in your area?" And I said, "Yes, Heavener is in my area.

And this young sergeant and his wife and children, had departed from boot camp someplace down South and he was headed to Kansas, but his car broke down, and I want to tell you a story he told me. The people of Heavener basically took him in and made sure he got around. A minister worked with him. They got the necessary parts at the parts store and one of the guys at the garage helped fix his automobile. His wife and children stayed in the living room of an air-conditioned home until they got the car going again.

They sent him on his way and refused to take any money. They said, "Go ahead and send it to us later on when you get back to your destination." And he went on his way.

But this young sergeant took time from the Pentagon to call me to let me know about my constituents and how great they were and how they treated him.

I just wanted to tell you that little story from a young sergeant who was in a real, real crisis. So it is about as close to heaven as you can get, Charlie, down in this area.

I know you are a good Baptist, and these are good Baptists and a lot of other religions in this part of the State of Oklahoma.

Mr. WHITLEY. When my car breaks down, I will try to make sure it is in Heavener.

Proceed, Mr. White.

STATEMENT OF GENE H. WHITE, PRESIDENT, BURNETT LUMBER CO., INC.

Mr. WHITE. Congressman Whitley and Congressman Watkins, if you will excuse me for being ineloquent. I am retired from lumber manufacturing, and I will do my best.

I think, in listening to this, it brought a thing to mind to me that says when one guy's job is at stake and the other guy seemingly will not play fair, you have to mix it up a little. That is what we are both doing here today proposing this.

The first time I appeared in opposition to the wilderness was in the early 1970's at the request of the Forest Service, Shreveport, LA. So this has been going on for me 12 or 15 years in this continuing effort from RARE I to RARE II.

My family and I reside in Heavener, OK, here in Le Flore County. I have owned and operated a lumber manufacturing plant for some 25 years. I am currently retired and involved in investments. I am an avid fisherman—almost went today—I do some hunting, and in general on a weekly-daily basis, I utilize and appreciate the outdoors we have here in the national forest.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to conduct this hearing on the wilderness designation issue in our national forest here in Le Flore County, OK. I think it is especially helpful that you have convened this hearing in Poteau so that we may conveniently and directly speak to you on this important issue affecting our county and our area of the State of Oklahoma.

I would like to turn, if you will follow with me, to page 5, where I have listed 17 reasons that I oppose wilderness designation in Oklahoma:

The U.S. Forest Service in the past and currently has done an excellent job of managing the national forest in our area under the multiple-use concept. The areas in question are in question today not because they have been reserved or saved or preserved by the Forest Service, but because they have been created and protected by the Forest Service under current policies. The Forest Service currently has the authority and latitude to protect this property through the planning and decisionmaking process of professional resource managers. I ask that the Forest Service be allowed to adhere to and continue that policy of multiple use as established by law.

Added to this and contrary to what I have heard from the Wildlife Federation, these areas are not the last and have not been saved by the Forest Service. You must remember they have been created. These are not virgin territories. They do have roads. The roads they have in them were ruled out when RARE I was moved to RARE II. They were ruled out because the Forest Service determined there that the roads there were no longer roads. They set new standards. So they are roaded areas, but they are not roaded areas by law now.

Item 2, it is not yet fully understood—I don't know if it ever will be—it is not yet fully understood how the Clean Air Act and its amendments of 1977 and later will affect the surrounding areas of a designated wilderness. The air quality standards that are set for any wilderness area do affect the operation and growth of a broad cross section of industrially-based operations within a many mile radius of the wilderness. At this time, we do not know all the possible consequences of this act.

Item 3, the fighting of forest fires, insects, and diseases in designated wilderness areas is severely limited. Access for the tools to stop the fire or insects is nonexistent in a designated wilderness area. This access is the single-most important factor in controlling these enemies of the forest. The areas within and adjacent to wilderness will be contaminated or burned. Forest Service records and court records show this to be an indisputable truth.

Item 4, to create widerness from productive lands currently managed for one or several valid uses is not compatible with other national goals for holding down inflation, providing adequate housing, reducing unemployment, and broadening the spectrum of outdoor recreation experiences for the majority of the public.

Item 5, many acres of private lands, within the National Forest boundaries, will be impacted by this wilderness designation. The issue of the taking of private land or the establishing of rules concerning its current and future use should be given serious thought. The Forest Service has the authority to condemn private property within or adjacent to wilderness areas if the management of that land is not appropriate. Legal precedent has already been established in the Redwood National Forest buffer zones for the taking by condemnation of private lands. This legal precedent affects every existing and proposed wilderness area.

Item 6, the tick problem in our area affects both humans and animals. This tick problem lowers our quality of life and limits our potential for many industries, including tourism. Large amounts of private, State and Federal moneys have been spent on research efforts for eradication of ticks in this country and area of the State. Restrictions on wilderness designated areas will render any proposed effort ineffective. Again, preservationists have filed lawsuits guaranteeing failure of these programs and establishing legal precedent to same.

Item 7, proponents of wilderness designation have stated publicly, and we have heard testimony here this morning repeatedly from their side, from the proponents, that in their opinion we will have favorable economic impact because of designated wilderness in our area. This opinion is based on the proponents' visits and use of the designated areas. The areas are here now, they have always been here, with or without designation. I have no record of one single contribution made to the economy of this area by the proponents. It is not a reasonable assumption that many visitors will suddenly appear and contribute to our economy immediately upon designation or in the long term following designation. The land is here now. Where are the tourists now?

Item 8, mineral development would be prohibited. We shouldn't lock away potentially valuable minerals and fuels while the importing of same contributes to our trade deficit.

Item 9, timber harvesting is definitely not allowed in a wilderness. Local revenues derived from the sale of timber from the national forest will be reduced. In addition, timber-related jobs will be curtailed affecting the whole economy of the area.

Item 10, the locking up of timber in wilderness helps create a shortage of timber and wood products. The cost of building new homes is already beyond too many Americans. To take a commodity, and in this case our only renewable resource, and purposely reduce its availability is foolhardy.

Item 11, wilderness designation permits little wildlife management. I believe that comment was also made by a proponent of wilderness this morning. Most wildlife game species live in a managed forest.

Item 12, the Forest Service estimates that less than 1 percent of the American people will ever visit a wilderness area.

Item 13, there can be no man-made structures in a wilderness area. There can be no roads, and off-road vehicles are not allowed. The only access allowed within a wilderness area is foot traffic or on horseback. You cannot take a Sunday afternoon drive through a wilderness area.

Item 14, all of the national forest land in Oklahoma adjoins the Arkansas border. There are currently designated wilderness areas joining this borderline on the Arkansas side. The use of those already established wilderness areas is available and the designation of Oklahoma land would not change the driving distance for those who wish to use designated wilderness by more than a few miles.

Item 15, a wilderness area is not static. One does not stop the forest evolving at some desired state by congressional action. Wilderness forests grow old, deteriorate and die. There is no such thing as a living museum. To live means to change.

Item 16, in our society, where we rightfully require all public and privately owned buildings and facilities to build access for the handicapped, we create wilderness areas which, by their regulations, forever forbid use of these areas to the handicapped. Oddly enough, this is being done on Federal property by the Federal Government. Can you imagine the public outcry if this was being done on private property?

Item 17, the words "multiple-use" includes use by all, including wildlife federations and wilderness proponents. It is not us who would exclude them, but they who would exclude us.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you for your statement, Mr. White.

Mr. Watkins, do you have any questions or comments?

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman, may I refer back to my first page?

Mr. WHITLEY. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. I have a little more, if I could please.

Mr. WHITLEY. Yes, sir. Go right ahead.

Mr. WHITE. I would like to continue in the middle of my first page where I mention Congressman Watkins has, for all his tenure of office, worked for industrial development in this area. He has made few decisions while in office without this issue being involved in one way or another. Congressman Watkins was quoted recently during the announcing of an energy plant in this county as saying,

> The economic impact of the new energy plant going in east of Panama will be staggering. The AES plant would be a catalyst for economic and job development in southeast Oklahoma. The economic and job development potential from coal and other industries are the major reasons we have been working with Red-Ark Development to save the Rock Island Railroad in the heart of this potential coal development area.

If the industrial development context of my talk sounds out of place at a wilderness designation hearing, I ask your indulgence. With the Clean Air Act of 1977 and its amendments and all other acts and amendments applying to our environment with special emphasis for designated wilderness areas, we could be in trouble. We know that any area within many miles of the designated wilderness area is affected by rules applying to that wilderness area.

The effect of these regulations has the potential of stopping any and all industrial development in this area forever. We cannot have industrial development without in some way altering the air, water, or environment. The designation of this wilderness area makes us less competitive than other communities located greater distances from these areas. Whether by act, amendment to those acts, regulations or by the delaying action of hundreds of frivolous lawsuits filed by preservationist groups makes no difference. It still has the potential of stopping industrial development in our area of Oklahoma.

I am going to skip the next paragraph, go to the next.

We are observing a continuous exodus of people to urban population centers; 70 percent of our U.S. citizens live on 2 percent of the land. Rural areas contain one-third of the population, half the poverty, two-thirds of the substandard housing, yet receive only one-fourth of the income. How many of us have watched our hometown populations dwindle? When a new industry does build in a rural area, it barely supplies jobs for those already in the community.

Underpopulated small towns are becoming less able to provide needed services. Yet we know that the people will go to the jobs. If we put jobs in the cities, they will come. If we put jobs in smaller communities, they will come. They will build homes and build up the services that the town offers and revive that small town.

The big frustration in the environmental cause versus jobs battle has been that those who are being hurt seem to have no recourse under the law. It sometimes seems that any ding-a-ling can stop the economic activity on which forested areas depend, but those who are being hurt, particularly those who are being put out of work, have no way of fighting back.

It is my desire that those people with preservationist ideas living in cities and areas outside of ours not help place restrictions on us that prevents our growth by promoting the designation of these wilderness areas.

Frivolous and unnecessary lawsuits by wilderness groups have effectively prevented the protection and preservation of wilderness areas and the protection of all areas adjoining and surrounding those areas Regardless of the words of the act and its amendments, these lawsuits stall or prevent action for years. The lawsuits have a way of delaying action until the taking of action to save the forest and wilderness areas is no longer important because it is too late to save either one.

Item 3 in my reasons opposed to the wilderness designation relates to the U.S. Forest Service not being able to protect the land from fire and insects. In the summer of 1985, the southern pine beetle reached epidemic proportions in the States of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. The salvaging of damaged timber has flooded the timber market with damaged timber. A U.S. district court judge has prohibited cutting off buffer strips around wilderness areas infested with the southern pine beetle, drastically hindering U.S. Forest Service efforts to contain the pest. According to Judge Gerhard A. Gesell, the Forest Service failed to complete the environmental impact statements required under the National Environmental Policy Act. Wilderness areas in Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana are affected by the ruling.

However, Gesell did permit the cutting if the beetle was encroaching on colonies of the red cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species. He said that cutting of buffer strips was not a scientifically proven method of control, but common sense would seem to suggest it would have some effect, and, therefore, allowed cutting immediately around a colony of the endangered bird.

This type of ruling is the reason that I am here today. This type of ruling has haunted professional foresters for more than 20 years. This tragedy in these States has been repeated numerous times on millions of acres throughout the Nation.

This dogged adherence by preservation groups to their principle of nature knows best has destroyed homes, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and valuable timber. And for what?

Nature is neither benign, as some believe, nor as fragile as they would have us believe. When a natural disaster occurs, preservationist interests counter with statements about nature's great powers of recuperation. Yet when similarly confronted with developments by man, they speak of the irreversible damage which will result. They can't have it both ways. Or can they?

Can you imagine your chances if you own local fire department had to go through the same regulations to put out a fire in your home as the Forest Service must to put out a fire in or around a designated wilderness area? The consequences are too gross to imagine.

The Wildlife Federation, and I have attended meetings where they have spoken before about the peacefulness and serenity found in the designated areas, where you never hear the roar of an engine or the closing of the door of our vehicles. In a designated wilderness, you will not even have to hear the squeaking of the wheel of a wheelchair. The disabled cannot get to and utilize these areas.

These same Wildlife Federation members don't mind disturbing the peacefulness and serenity of others with the crack of a rifle shot or the screams of wounded animals. This group will tell of the necessity to harvest the animals for their own good. To harvest as if they were wheat or soybeans. This same group would not allow the same principles to apply to the trees and forests.

Environmentalists collect wilderness. The problem lies in deciding when your collection is complete. If the collection is large enough, there is the problem of upkeep and management to consider or the treasured objects will waste away and lose value. The problem with environmentalists is not knowing when enough is enough. If environmentalists are allowed to continue helping themselves to public forest lands, many who depend on the resource for their livelihood may lose their jobs.

I believe the U.S. Forest Service has done an excellent job of managing this land up to now and will continue to do so in the future. I suggest we not change the rules and make it impossible to protect not only this land we are referring to as wilderness, but also all that land adjoining these areas.

In other meetings prior to these, words like abuse, willful neglect, desecration, destruction, and rape have been used by preservationist groups concerning the management practices of the U.S. Forest Service. I would encourage all involved, including Congressmen here today, to visit these areas in question soon and see if you believe any of these words apply.

Once more, I urge you to look at a job well done and leave the management and protection of these lands in the hands of those who have done so well.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak out on this important subject, and thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. White appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you, Mr. White, for again a very comprehensive statement.

Mr. Watkins, do you have any questions or comments?

Mr. WATKINS. All I know, Mr. Chairman, is that I am going to be sure and watch what I say, because I have been quoted back two or three times today. I can assure you I plead guilty to the statement that was just made. The reason, Gene, we want to be real careful, we want to know what effect in the environmental area the wilderness has. I know there are people who promote no growth, and no manufacturing or industrial development in the areas.

Mr. Chairman, the pollution from New Orleans has caused enough deviation in our air that it is about to shut down job opportunities in the Third Congressional District, because there cannot be any deviation. But our children have to inhale worse pollution in the major metropolitan areas than if they were able to live in this part of the State.

So we want to be very careful how this factor is considered, and I can assure you I will have staff researching how the Clean Air Act is looked at as far as wilderness. You have made some very good points, and, again, I thank you. We have good, strong arguments for both sides. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. WHITE. Congressman Watkins, I would like to mention that I don't—as an ex-sawmill person, a current person who uses the woods, these areas that have been picked are pretty rough areas. Timber hasn't been cut on them for two reasons. One is they have been in the study area; and, two, the odds are it is not going to be cut anyhow. I don't have a lot of objection to those areas being set aside in some form.

I know the Forest Service has a term that they don't like to use, but they have, and they have a right to use it. It is known as scenic. You can designate it as a scenic area, and they don't have to cut it or disturb it. But it does not go under the rules of the wilderness area where they can no longer protect it. I believe there is room for compromise somewhere. I just have trouble with the rules specifically concerning wilderness areas and how they affect our whole area. I am more concerned with the unlivability, economicwise, of the lawsuits that are filed in relation to those laws while it is being established just what we are going to do.

Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you, Mr. White.

I want to thank all of the witnesses who have appeared and testified this morning, a number of them on their own time and at their own expense as a result of their interest in a matter that is very vital to this area, and to all of you who are here this morning. And before we close the hearing, I would like to ask if there is anyone here in the audience—oh, have I missed one? Claude Eberle, superintendent of schools of Smithville, OK.

Mr. Eberle, I am sorry, I about shut you off there. I was just going to invite others who might be interested to make a brief statement.

Mr. **Watkins**. I appreciate the chairman mentioning that a little earlier, because I think that some of you may want to make a comment. If you do, it will need to be very short and brief. I would like to ask if there are individuals here that have land within that national forest? I would especially appreciate comments from them, because they have land or homesteads there. I would like to know what you perceive or feel about the wilderness area.

Mr. **Whitley**. Mr. Eberle, as I said, is superintendent of schools, and, Mr. Eberle, we would be delighted to hear from you at this time.

STATEMENT OF CLAUDE EBERLE, SUPERINTENDENT, SMITHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. **Eberle**. Mr. Chairman and Congressman Watkins, I am happy to get a chance to be here. A lot of my written testimony I will not go through because it has been repeated here several times this morning. I would like to center on the fact that I am representing not only Smithville school district, but I am representing many of the citizens of the Beach Creek area. I have talked with them, visited with them, and I heard a while ago that there were 736 respondents. I didn't know that there was that many people who even knew where Beach Creek was, much less lived within 20 miles of it.

It is an isolated area, but it is a part of my district. My district has 162 square miles of southern Le Flore County, 6 miles deep entirely across the south side of the county, have an additional 18 square miles in Push County, 200 square miles in McCurtain County. So we live on the south slope of the Kiamichi Mountains.

I am concerned about the financial and economic impacts. In my 21 years as a public school administrator, I have been assured many times that taxes were being passed for education, and I never did see any of the money, and I have been assured many times that a law was going to be changed and that it wouldn't hurt the school district financially, but my check went down.

I do know that our income from the rentals of forest reserves is currently received in four or five schools. I am the only one that is represented here. The other schools are Hodgens, Talihina, Heavener, and Whitesboro. But I do not represent them. I have talked to some of them. I do know that the amount of forest in the area that is harvested is critical to the amount of revenue that comes in. We were mentioning this 25 percent. I do know also that the road funds are also critical on our schoolbus routes for maintenance of roads.

Now, I may be a little trite here, and I may be a little humorous to some, I don't know. But I am kind of interested in these statements here. I have heard the words "roadless areas," and I thought it was pretty well roadless south of Kiamichi Mountain except for U.S. 259 went through it. If you run my schoolbus routes, you would find that out.

But also in these areas that are listed as road less, I do happen to know that there are roads. Now, we are kind of hillbilly down there, but if the Forest Service would like to come down here on this map, we will straighten them out as to some of these facts they have got named on this map here. There is some misinformation, but it does not critically affect the testimony.

I think that probably the financial thing is our key thing. I would also like to skip over some of the other things that others went over.

I would like to dwell lightly on the grazing and the livestock area. McCurtain County is the second largest in the State in cow-calf units and Le Flore County is third. There are large numbers of horses and cows in the mountains of southern Le Flore County and northern McCurtain County that have grazing rights in the Ouachita National Forest. Of course, most of the grazing rights come through private leases from Weyerhaeuser Lumber Co. But all these areas are grazed.

And there are many of the people in the Beach Creek area that depend almost solely on livestock for their income. There are many people that live in the Beach Creek area that don't know that there are not roads in that area, because they have to travel them to get out and in. And I must confess that my schoolbus has to travel them, or the kids couldn't come to school. So there are roads in some of those areas, and especially in the Breach Creek area, that I am addressing.

Now, I would like to respond a little. Odie Haley was introduced from Mount Hermon, and that is right next to our McCurtain County wilderness area that is a State wilderness area that is on the south edge of my district about 20 miles from the proposed Beach Creek area that would be a part of this. So there is a wilderness area already there, but it is not a national wilderness area. I understand that the rules are different for State and national. Nothing is allowed on the McCurtain County wilderness area except insects and wildlife.

Now, we do have a little discrepancy in information we have been given. We have been told that private land would not be involved. Yet there is 20 percent of the land that is included in the Beach Creek survey that is private land. I have been told the wilderness areas do not have the authority to condemn private land.

I heard Mr. Jameson make the statement there a while ago that no private land would be taken without just compensation. Sometimes there is no price on a homestead. My dad has one. It is not in this part of the State. I don't reckon you could buy it, and it is not worth very much dollar-and-cent wise, but I don't reckon you could buy it because he was born and raised there and all his children were. We do have some of these situations in the Beach Creek area.

Another thing I would like to respond to is that even though I know the buffer zones are not statutory, they are threatening, and they are of unknown dimensions and unknown depths. We do not know how much of the area surrounding would eventually possibly come under statutory rules. This area that would come under almost certainly would include schoolbus routes, access to private residents and to homes in that area. So I think that the buffer zone, the possibility of the buffer zone around these kind of areas is certainly one to be considered.

I referred to the McCurtain County wilderness area, the State area, for a reason. I am a biologist, and I am a former agricultural teacher both, and I do know that the firefighting problems get serious sometimes in areas where you cannot use motorized vehicles and where you cannot fight the insects. You can see the dead trees standing that haven't been harvested in the McCurtain County wilderness area. Mount Hermon, which is where I think Odie introduced himself from, is a few miles from there. I do respect both sides, but we are looking on one side, and now we are looking at the possibility of going on the other side of the area.

Now, my fifth point of opposition is largely geographical and political. I am not a native of northern McCurtain County or southern Le Flore County. I was born and raised in Seminole County. I have been in the area since 1965. I do think that the Third Congressional District is very important to all of us. It is very important. I remember where I was born and raised. I think we need to consider what we exist for. I make a living down here, and all of us, but we are not existing for just a place to furnish scenery, water, and natural resources to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and other urban areas to come down and look at once in a while while we remain impoverished. We want to use our resources to furnish jobs and keep our young people in the area if they choose to stay.

Within the last few days, I have had two different notifications, it would possibly happen at home, but the young people moved away, got killed on the job from other States, we didn't even know about the funeral until after it was all over with. We would like to keep our kids at home here if they would like to stay. We are a little tired of being stepchildren, whether it be in handing out aid to education or whether it be in talking about we don't pay any taxes.

We would like to live off our own efforts in the Third Congressional District of Oklahoma. We would like to be allowed to develop. We want jobs and development. We want a way of taking care of our own needs, and we are not going to get that chance just simply by an economic impact from visiting a wilderness area that maybe they will visit once a year or once in a lifetime.

Now, I am opposed to clearcutting of which there has been some done in the Ouachita National Forest, because I have seen it. I am opposed to that concept, and I certainly would encourage a selective cutting concept. But I would close by stating that I do understand the need and the purpose of us having national recreation areas and national wilderness areas.

And you might say, "Yeah, but you don't want them in your area." I don't want them whenever they affect the way of living to the extent that we have people who lose land, that we have buffer zones that are established, that we lose moneys for schools when we are already losing moneys from the State, the Federal and all the other directions when they have stood to lose all they can.

If I really had the assurance that I wouldn't lose any finances and that our people wouldn't be affected, I would feel comfortable, but I think everybody is aware of the fact that after a law is passed, it is almost impossible to get it changed. And then nobody really knows the effect, no matter how much they will get, until it is passed.

I thank you for allowing me to appear on behalf of the people of the Beach Creek area and my school district.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Eberle appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. WHITLEY. Just a few questions, Mr. Eberle.

You alluded to grazing rights. Is there grazing now going on in these four areas that were identified in the RARE II study?

Mr. EBERLE. I am not familiar with the three northern areas. I am only familiar with the Beach Creek area.

Mr. WHITLEY. Is there grazing in the Beach Creek area?

Mr. EBERLE. There is grazing. I do not know to what extent that it has arrangements with the Ouachita National Forest, but of course, private land, a lot of it is not fenced.

Mr. WHITLEY. Another question. Mr. Ballentine in his testimony gave us figures that indicated that in the years since 1978 when there has been no cutting of timber and, therefore, no income derived from these four areas, that income to the local area of the country, the school district has continued to increase. Are these figures correct?

Mr. EBERLE. The local population?

Mr. WHITLEY. Mr. Ballentine's figures that he alluded to in his testimony about——

Mr. WATKINS. The dollars.

Mr. EBERLE. On the dollars and cents?

Mr. WHITLEY. Yes.

Mr. EBERLE. They vary greatly. This year my allocation was 20,000. Last year it was 23,000. The year before that it was 8,000. The year before that it was 19,000, and before that we were in court for 14 years trying to get our share. I don't know what it was. It was all put in escrow.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you

Mr. WATKINS. Mr. Eberle, I appreciate your testimony. I am not going to let you off just yet.

You mentioned the State wilderness, and I have a question on its management.

Do you know approximately how many acres are invovled in that? I know where it is located, but I don't know how it is managed.

Mr. EBERLE. Somewhere around 14,000 or 15,000 acres. Broken Bow Lake comes through it. They do allow fishing on the lake, but there is no hunting. There is no anything except a biologist who lives on it.

Mr. WATKINS. Does the State provide you some kind of in-lieu-of tax or anything like that?

Mr. **Eberle**. No. I have only a small area bordered on my district, and I have only a small town here.

Most of them are from Broken Bow and Eagletown School Districts. There is no compensation. Now, there is some compensation from the Federal Government for impact to date, but there is none from the State wilderness lands.

I can speak for the superintendent of Eagletown because I am very close to him, as you know, Mr. Coleman, and I do know that he doesn't get any funds from it.

Mr. **Watkins**. OK. I have a question—you may not be able to answer, but it is on my mind and I am looking for an answer.

I notice there are about 2,068 acres in the Kerr Arboretum area. I don't know if it is treated like a wilderness or not. Maybe I am asking that question out loud so someone could provide an answer for the record.

You indicated that you had school buses go through the Beach Creek area to pick up children.

Mr. **Eberle**. Well, we go up the road right at the edge—right at the present time, all of them have graduated.

The families are still there, the old people. We have gone up toward Walnut Mountain on the road that comes in from Tree Sticks and goes all the way through the national forest and then comes back on what is called the Zapher Road by the Arkansas State line that runs west of that and back to Highway 259.

We have used that road to pick up children in the past. At the present moment, we have gone 3 or 4 miles to pick up students.

The Beach Creek area, I notice here that that road here borders it all the way around the edge. That is the main road in that area.

There are range roads there that do exist, but they are probably not listed or shown by the Forest Service.

Mr. **Watkins**. I know you are concerned about the economy down there. You brought it up. You have a lot of open range, and they have legalized several things and others are still illegal.

Mr. **Eberle**. A few illegal things.

Mr. **Watkins**. We need to see what we can come up with to try to build that opportunity.

Mr. **Eberle**. We are losing children in our area, our population. Probably as many houses are occupied as we are losing children, and we are having a lot of influx in and out of schoolchildren moving in, staying 2 months, moving out, being gone 3 months, coming in for 3 months.

In the last 4 or 5 years while Oklahoma has been on a down boom on the economy—we have had much more of this in the past. Used to be they were all—we would start at the start of school with a little population, and you would increase up to the end of the year.

Then they would go off to Wyoming to work. They would go off to other areas to work and come back in about the second month after school.

But in the last 2 or 3 years, the cycle has changed and they are in and out, in and out, and we are getting a lot of migrants into the area that are new people coming in, just settling in.

And we have problems. We do not have a good tax base. We have a very low tax base. We depend on the Government. Out of a $1.3

million budget, we get close to half of it out of the Federal Government, and you know what we are facing there. The Governor would like to put us out in 5 years.

Mr. **Watkins**. I appreciate your testimony, Claude. I know it is sincere because you have talked to me about this and other things on several occasions.

Mr. **Eberle**. Thank you very much.

Mr. **Whitley**. From the Chairman, we again would like members of the audience, if there is someone who has a brief statement and would like to have an opportunity to be heard, this is your opportunity.

Mr. **Watkins**. Why don't you come down to the front row so it won't take a long time.

And I would like to echo what the chairman said; keep your statement brief. Give them your name so we will know who is giving a statement.

STATEMENT OF W.D. GREGORY, McCURTAIN COUNTY, OK

Mr. **Gregory**. I am W.D. Gregory from down in McCurtain County. And I am up here primarily today—I enjoyed this meeting, but primarily to a problem I have with the national forest, and I thought Chairman Whitley might be able to help me or you or someone, in what direction to turn.

I have 1,010 acres down on the Little River which comes in next to the mountain floor and the national forest has approximately 400 acres, has cut this range half in two. It is a narrow strip, and it has become where it is impossible to range this thing peaceably, and I have sold the place and I got it back due to the fact that their estimate from—the national forest boys leased it to the boy that was on the ranch.

And they have moved my fences which has been there for 40 or 50 years. I have affidavits they were there over 35 years and did not build a fence, moved a picket fence at all when it is moved, and it took quite a bit of my property, and I have been unable so far to get any response.

The U.S. attorney has been very courteous to try and help us, but as of this date he hasn't got any commitment from the national forest, and I may be in the wrong position here, but I need some help from somewhere to get straigthened out.

Mr. **Watkins**. I think you have come to the right place to get some attention.

I would like to have some written information on this problem so I can look at the facts and make sure we have your phone number and address.

And we might be able to get the National Forest Service's attention to see what can be done. I am sure this is a legitimate problem, and if the facts are there, we will try to get it corrected.

If there is some other reason why there hasn't been appropriate consideration given as you have made your request, we will find out why not.

So, I appreciate you, and I would like to ask you to get with Ray Sharp of my staff and give him the needed information.

Ray, raise your hand so he can come over and give you the information so we may look into it quickly.

Mr. **Gregory**. Thank you for listening to me.

STATEMENT OF HERSHEL LESTER, POTEAU, OK

Mr. **Lester**. I am Hershel Lester here at Poteau, and, Congressman Whitley, I would like to thank you for coming down, because that is the only way you are going to find out what the people in Le Flore County want.

I admit that we are a little bit clannish, and maybe there wouldn't be anything wrong with that if we could take you into the clan.

Mr. **Whitley**. I would be glad to join.

Mr. **Lester**. And I am going to be selfish here. I am going to talk——

Mr. **Watkins**. Does that start with a "c" or "k?"

Mr. **Lester**. Clan? I am going to violate what I just said about being clannish. I am going to talk primarily to Wes Watkins, Congressman Wes Watkins, because he will probably have to interpret what I have tried to say so that you can understand it, anyway.

Mr. **Whitley**. You are talking my language. You go ahead.

Mr. **Lester**. Wes Watkins and I—it wasn't a very big business deal for him, but it was a pretty good one for me.

And, Congressman, do you remember having to put the third front door on that house before we got that like I wanted?

Mr. **Watkins**. Yes.

Mr. **Lester**. I wanted to say publicly that he dotted every "i" and crossed every "t," and I believe he will do what he said he would do.

And he has said that he came down here to find out what the people of Le Flore County wanted. I didn't put the words in your mouth then, did I?

Mr. **Watkins**. No, sir.

Mr. **Lester**. OK. I am not sure that Le Flore County can afford what is being proposed here today. I had to afford that house that he built, and I am wondering if Le Flore County can afford some of these things.

Wes, I think you are already suspicious—Congressman, pardon me. I think you are already suspicious.

I think you are already suspicious that these magazine polls won't hold water so far as people in Le Flore County is concerned, your district.

And do you honestly believe, either one of you, that if our county commissioners thought that a wilderness would bring more money to this county, that they would go on record against it?

Do you believe that 87, 86, 67, 74 percent—do you believe if they went against something that that many of their voters were in favor of that they would be here very long?

If you were going for advice on how to manage forests, who would you go to? I thought that is what the Soil Convservation District was for. And you heard from the chairman of this Soil Conservation District, the first or second speaker here today.

I hope we are not in that bad a shape, and I don't mean to criticize anybody that has been on the program. I happen to like Abe Hesser, I really do. But do you remember Arrowhead and Fountainhead? I don't think we can afford that. That is my opinion.

And I know that you are going to have to compromise when you go through here, probably, and I will accept you on that, but I literally hate that word "compromise."

This thing is either good or it isn't. The best I have been able to find out, it isn't. I am against it.

Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you, Mr. Lester.

Mr. **Watkins**. Thank you, Mr. Lester. I might say to all the folks, I have known Mr. Lester a long time.

Not only have I changed that door three times when I built that home for you, do you recall your wife had a problem with cabinets, and I got up at 4:30 in the morning so I could catch that cabinetmaker and made sure he got the job done right.

And I am proud to say we always attempted to do what we thought was right when I was in business, and continue to try to do what is right as your Congressman now.

And I would say it is a delight having you come today to deliver this testimony. I have always had a great admiration for you and what you have done for a lot of young people throughout this area of the State.

So thank you, Mr. Lester.

Mr. **Lester**. I hope you are proud of Le Flore County agriculture.

Mr. **Watkins**. I am.

Mr. **Lester**. Incidentally, I am not on anyone's payroll.

STATEMENT OF MARK DERICHSWEILER, CHAIRMAN, OKLAHOMA WILDERNESS COALITION

Mr. **Derichsweiler**. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Watkins, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Mark Derichsweiler, and I am chairman of the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition.

The Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition is composed of approximately 20 citizen groups from throughout our State who share a keen interest in the preservation of our remaining wildlands.

We would first like to take the opportunity to express our thanks to the subcommittee for holding this hearing today to learn the views of Oklahomans regarding wilderness in our State.

We are particularly appreciative of your efforts, Congressman Watkins, in arranging this hearing, and we extend our thanks for your interest in this issue.

I might point out, Mr. Chairman, that I did give copies of my statement to the staff here for the record.

Mr. Chairman, the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition strongly supports the preservation of four eligible roadless areas in our State as wilderness.

We are pleased to hear the support of so many others expressed here today for protection of the Upper Kiamichi and Black Fork Mountain areas.

I would point out that we also favor wilderness status for these areas but that there are two others, Rich Mountain and Beach Creek, which we feel are equally deserving of this designation.

The Oklahoma Natural Heritage Program has noted that the Rich Mountain area is distinquished by the presence not only of species of plants and animals endemic to the Ouachita Mountains, but also the presence of several species which are known to occur only on Rich Mountain.

Protection of this area as wilderness will ensure the integrity of this unique habitat and will complement the Robert S. Kerr Arboretum which is located on the west boundary.

Protection of this area also would enhance the values of Talimena Scenic Drive, which is also adjacent, by preserving the high quality views which have made the drive so famous.

The Beach Creek area, we believe, is highly suitable for wilderness management due to the fact that it consists of a single, unified hydrologic unit, the Beach Creek drainage basin.

This results in a minimum of impacts due to activities occurring outside the area. The size, shape, and location of this area allow the visitor a solitude that is difficult to equal, yet access is such that many people could experience it.

The variety of terrain, from rugged slopes to crystal clear mountain streams and gentle valleys, offer high quality wilderness attributes.

This area is home to several plant species rare in Oklahoma, such as the American beech tree, the Mountain azalea, and the American holly.

Beach Creek also provides prime habitat for game animals, especially the Rio Grande wild turkey. For all these reasons, Beach Creek is perhaps the most treasured of the potential wilderness areas.

Its future is certainly of great concern to the members of the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition. Unfortunately, it is also the most endangered because of the logging and road building which has already been scheduled.

We believe this area would be an outstanding contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System, and we strongly support its protection as wilderness.

Oklahoma currently has only one designated wilderness area. It is located in the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge.

This area is so overused that tight restrictions had to be placed on visitors there. We believe that wilderness status for all four of these forest roadless areas is needed to meet the demand for wilderness recreation and to disperse this use.

Forest wilderness areas will also provide a range of wilderness experiences for State residents.

I would like to point out that the Wichita Mountains area is quite different from the forested mountains that we have here in the eastern part of the State.

Mr. Chairman, I personally explored all four of these areas. Each of them is individually unique and deserving of formal protection as wilderness.

We in the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition are eager to work with you and Congressman Watkins to develop legislation that will protect these last remnants of an important part of our natural heritage.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Derichsweiler appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you, Mr. Derichsweiler.

Mr. **Watkins**. You mentioned the Kerr Arboretum, I guess I can get that information from somewhere, but do you happen to know how it is managed?

Mr. **Kelly**. By the park rangers.

Mr. **Watkins**. Do you mean the Forest Service manages it?

Unidentified Speaker. No, it is not managed as a wilderness at all. The regulations governing wilderness are not used in the Kerr Arboretum.

In effect, everything except the developed part of the Kerr Arboretum is wilderness, as such, because it is not—doesn't have any roads in it.

But we can go in there with equipment if we need to to fight fires or insects. There is just no restrictions on it, as such.

Mr. **Watkins**. Thank you for clearing that up. I did not know the answer, so I appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF MARY PEARSON, POTEAU, OK

Ms. **Pearson**. Good morning, Congressman Watkins. My name is Mary Pearson. I would like to say that I am an import to the State of Oklahoma. I moved out of a large city, drawn to the area because of its natural beauty.

I also managed to purchase acreage smack dab on the corner of the Upper Kiamichi area that is up for wilderness designation.

Be that as it may, I would like to state that I am in favor of these areas. I think that they will be a good thing for the State of Oklahoma. I have called your office and also have written you letters about my feelings about the designation.

I urge you, sir, to consider past the economic arguments—that is mostly what we have been hearing this morning—against the designation.

I urge you to consider the potential for tourism and also the fact that the Forest Service—the forestry that is done in this area will not be impacted as heavily as some of the speakers have said.

I feel that having the Forest Service look over the wilderness designated areas is sort of like asking the cat to look after the canary.

I really do think that these areas are necessary. After these are gone, if these are allowed to be used for forestry and development, they will be gone forever, sir, and like the passenger pigeon, that can't be replaced.

That is all, I guess.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. **Watkins**. Mary, you say you live on the upper corner or on the edge of the area. Are you on the southern edge?

Ms. **Pearson**. I have an acreage in the southeastern corner.

Mr. **Watkins**. In the southeastern corner, and your home would be affected by RARE II?

Ms. **Pearson**. Yes.

Mr. **Watkins**. I was just trying to determine the area you are from.

OK. Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF RUBEN WHITE, POTEAU, OK

Mr. **White**. I am Ruben White, been here all my life, born and raised here. You know, sitting back there, and I think about all these good people that comes in here from these faraway places, help us to decide what we need to do with our property around here.

And you are talking about this fighting the fires in the areas protected, and I had—I initiated a lawsuit with the State of Arkansas over some property. Wes, you remember that, I know, real well. Most everybody did.

It took us about 22 years to get in court. If it takes you that long to get in court to put out a fire, why, you won't have anything to put out.

Another thing I have been wondering about, will this cause the price of marijuana to go down? They will have plenty of room up there to raise it.

I think that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Leave it alone. We are doing all right here. We have done all right for several years, and we are progressing, and we appreciate this country, and I am against the wilderness area.

Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much.

Let me again reiterate that we want to hear everyone, but like our last witness, please keep your statements brief.

STATEMENT OF JIM FRAILEY, HEAVENER, OK

Mr. **Frailey**. Well, I am from Heavener or Heave-e-ner, as we call it, and Black Fork Mountain. You know, it is rough. It really is, because there is a cemetery right on top of that. I haven't heard anybody mention that. I haven't heard anybody say a word about it.

If they wanted to make that wilderness, what about the family of the people that are buried there? They couldn't drive to see it. They couldn't clean off the graves.

You know, it is when we kick the dead out, that is what settled that country. Those open spots out there they chopped out with chopping axes. They planted their gardens there, and now we have got a bunch of people that wants it to grow up, even the cemetery. And, you know, we don't—we don't particularly like that.

People come out of the cities down here to hunt—fine. They can buy their license. But don't come down here and push us around.

And we don't want to live in a place that you can't do anything about, and the fire danger in these mountains are terrible.

I know Wes knows that, and, of course, Wes has helped me on a lot of occasions, and we appreciate him very much from this part of the country. He is an honest man. We think he will do the best for us.

Mr. **Watkins**. For the record, would you make sure——

Mr. **Frailey**. Frailey, Jim Frailey.

Mr. WATKINS. And your address.

Mr. FRAILEY. Box 183.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF EVELYN CLARK, WINDING STAIR, OK

Ms. CLARK. I am Evelyn Clark, and I live about 45 miles south of here, which puts me north of Winding Stair. And when we moved here, my dad moved in a CC camp in 1933, so I think I am qualified to express my opinion.

We had to leave here because my husband was drafted, and I have two sons that had to leave here because there was no jobs. So I can appreciate both sides.

But also I am for the wilderness area because I would say 40 years ago you can see the difference. Have you been down in southeastern Oklahoma and seen the clearcuts?

Do we have a guarantee that these—all these beautiful forests won't be cut down by the Forest Service? And, as I say, I don't have a prepared speech because I didn't expect to speak. But I do want to go on record that I am for the wilderness area.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, Ms. Clark.

STATEMENT OF DON COX, McCURTAIN COUNTY, OK

Mr. COX. I would like to thank you, Mr. Whitley, and Congressman, my Congressman Wes Watkins for coming down here.

My name is Don Cox. I am regional vice-president for southeast Oklahoma of the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation.

As usually happens at these hearings, I feel at this point most of the bases have been tagged by both sides in opposition and proponents for the wilderness areas. So, I am not going to speak for the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation.

But I will speak as a north McCurtain County resident. I believe if there is anybody in the building here that is truly kind of caught in the middle and objective from both ends, I believe I am a good candidate.

I live in north McCurtain County. I am a father of four. I am a forest ranger. I work for the State of Oklahoma. I am knowledgeable of the competitive nature of the timber industry at this point in time and some of the problems that they have to deal with.

I, as a side line, run a small, modest sawmill business of my own. But I would have to say that I feel that in the need and in the pursuit and in looking for jobs and a way to build up the economy where we live, I feel that a good foundation to start moving in that direction would be the introduction of these four areas, these proposed areas in the wilderness.

I honestly do believe that the tourism potential is very untapped. There is a tremendous potential for tourism, and I think that the estimates that the department of tourism have made are probably very conservative.

So, what is good for the southeast Oklahoma economy, namely, McCurtain County and Le Flore County, is also good for me, because I happen to live here, and I want to continue to live here, and I think all things considered, that it would be a very good plus.

As I see the situation—like I say, being kind of caught in the middle—I see many, many pluses for this being set aside, and I don't see a whole lot of minuses.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much.

Mr. **Watkins**. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID JENNINGS, OKLAHOMA CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

Mr. **Jennings**. Good morning. My name is David Jennings, and I am here on behalf of the Oklahoma chapter of the Sierra Club.

I am professionally trained as a forester and as a wildlife biologist, so I have some background. I was asked to be the consultant to the Sierra Club here in the State on looking at the RARE II plans. I have some familiarity with the Forest Service and their actions here.

Although the Sierra Club has been participating in the RARE—with the wilderness issue and since RARE II, we didn't hear about this meeting until this weekend, and I didn't actually know I was supposed to come down till last night, so I don't have a prepared text.

Luckily, we have heard both sides. I think everything has been said. I just basically wanted to reiterate a few points.

According to the Forest Service, if these four areas were put into wilderness, there might be as much as a 2-cent-per-acre loss of Federal revenues.

The wilderness areas, 26,000 acres, make up 12 percent of the Federal acreage in the county. For simplicity this morning, I broke it down to 10 percent, which comes up to about 260,000 acres of Federal forestlands here. At a 2-cents-per-acre loss, that is a total of $5,200 decrease in revenue, possible decrease in revenue.

We heard from the State division of tourism that said according to their estimates—and they quoted confidence intervals and all sorts of things which has, at least, me partially convinced that they are fairly on market on the target—that there would be an increase of potentially $2,800,000 moneys brought in by tourists.

Even if they were off by a magnitude of 10, by an order of magnitude, that would still be $280,000 versus the $5,200 lost through Federal revenue.

According to the Forest Service, itself, with these four areas included, there would be a negligible effect on employment or unemployment, depending on your point of view.

When I analyzed Ouachita National Forest management plan, one of the things I found to my surprise was—well, two things.

One is that there is already acreages, tracts in the Ouachitas both in Oklahoma and in Arkansas that are put up for bid that aren't harvested because no one wants to go in there and get them.

And the other thing is that in Oklahoma at this point, it is cheaper to buy wood imported all the way from Canada than it is to buy wood harvested in the Ouachitas.

If that is the case, I think we owe it to ourselves to at least preserve these areas for a while. Because if it is put in a wilderness, it can be taken out of a wilderness by Congress if the need is developed.

It is not locked in there forever. It is locked in there until we the people through our elected representatives pull it back out.

It seems very credible to put it in there until we really need it. If we don't need it, I think we will do much better to get the tourist dollars. We have heard a lot of points today about it is our decision in Le Flore County.

This is national forest land. It is owned by all American citizens. The Oklahoma chapter sets conservation goals on a year-by-year basis. Getting these four areas into wilderness is our single biggest conservation goal of 1986. It is also one of the top three conservation goals for the Regional Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club, the Southern Plains Regional Conservation Committee, which consists of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas.

So it is not just—well, it is very much, sir, a local issue. It is also a national and regional issue, and I think that on the whole, we as a county—I can't say "we" because I haven't lived in this county. I live in Oklahoma City at this point. But we, the county, State and region and national are better off with these forest small areas in wilderness than log.

Thank you. And I will be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much.

Mr. **Watkins**. Just a quick calculation. Two cents on 26,000—that is $520. If that is all that is lost, then that would be a very good case. But that is one of the things we are going to be really checking on to find out about that.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you very much.

Mr. **Jennings**. Could I add one more comment?

Mr. **Whitley**. Briefly.

Mr. **Jennings**. I am sorry. I forgot to state in here before. We have heard Mr. Wood—Fox Wood—mentioned, the school superintendent mentioned it. Many other people have mentioned it today. There is a lot of opposition to clear cutting on our national forests.

I am a professional forester, and I realize that for Weyerhaeuser it is a good idea. But on our national forests, it is a policy that we are going to have to look at very closely.

In the Ouachitas, they are calling for clearcutting over 900,000 acres in the next 50 years. And I think that most people, when they realize that, find that very objectionable.

Thank you.

Mr. **Whitley**. Thank you.

This will be our final witness.

STATEMENT OF JACK KENNEDY, POTEAU, OK

Mr. **Kennedy**. My name is Jack Kennedy. I am born and raised over here on the Kiamichi River. I own land over there, and I am against this proposal.

In the first place, there is no such a thing as a roadless area in any of these areas. All four of them has got roads in them. There is some of them, mainly the Upper Kiamichi River area, there is a road starts at the west end of it there and goes clean to the Arkansas line, but it has been blocked off by forestry.

It is about—about half of it is probably growed up, you know. It has been blocked off for a few years there. But the railroad goes right down in between the Rich Mountain area and the Black Fork Mountain area. They are talking about clean air. They need to shut down the river. It is a possibility.

The only people that I feel like this is going to help is, like some of the other ones, they said, some of the marijuana growers.

Anyone that can't walk, all of our older people that is retired that lives over there—I am talking about people that lives in our area that would like to see this thing left open. They can drive into good hunting area. They can get out and walk 50 or 100 yards and sit down. They might get a deer.

I know how these wilderness areas work. I worked several years in California, and I lived by one out there, and they would block all of these good roads off from the highway.

They also take the land of people that has land, and I am sure if you check it out—I don't know this for 100 percent, but I am sure there is private land right in these areas that they are going to have to take to make a wilderness area, and I don't think these people wants to give up their land. Most of them probably don't even know we are having this meeting today.

Clear cuts, I think, are fine if they are managed like Weyerhaeuser has been managing them. They have got gorgeous pine forests coming on right now from waist high to 15 foot high. I have seen them. The way they skip around and do it, I don't think it is hurting our wildlife any.

These roads that we have already got built—this is another thing I wanted to bring up. Then I will shut up and let you go home.

We have got numerous amounts of roads back in these mountains, leads to good hunting territory, good places to camp. They have been water barred. You can't take no vehicle in there. To me that is all wilderness now. It is dense forest because I can't go there. I can't walk that far.

And I think we have got enough wilderness. If you will just drive around these roads that we have spent thousands and thousands of dollars building, they get through logging in there, they water bar. They leave a few roads open, but there is lots of them that is water barred.

Thousands of acres through there that would be called wilderness. So, I would rather leave it like it is. There is a lot more people over in our part of the country that feel the same way I feel.

Mr. WHITLEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, Jack.

Mr. WHITLEY. I think we have had a good airing of the issue this morning. We have had some very eloquent testimony on both sides.

We have tried to develop the facts in the case through testimony already in the record or additional information that will be supplied for the record.

It will certainly be the intention of my subcommittee and I am sure that of Congressman Watkins to study this issue very carefully, taking all this testimony into consideration.

Again, I want to thank everybody for taking their time to come and giving us the benefit of your testimony. Whatever decision the Congress makes in the future about wilderness areas in the Ouachita Forest, I am going to feel a whole lot better about that decision from having been here and heard direct testimony from the people who will be most directly involved, and again, I want to thank you all very much.

Mr. **Watkins**. If the chairman will allow me to make a couple of remarks before he sounds the gavel.

I want to personally thank all of you for coming. I don't know if we clarified it at all or if I just got a lot more homework to do, because I am going to go back and do indepth research, looking at every opinion that has been expressed here, and have a staff member seek out some answers.

How does wilderness affect this area for development? How does it reflect on the other side of the mountain on development?

There is much indepth research to be done. I would like to say, David, I don't know if we will have an answer, or Rick, on all of this in 1986. Because, I want to make sure that we have the best answer we can as we make that decision which might be looked at as just an act of Congress. Sometimes one of those acts of Congress goes into place that is very, very difficult to get changed or altered.

So, with Chairman Whitley's help, we are going to try to look into all of this, and I will have a staff member looking into the pros and cons.

Generally speaking, there has been a discussion on clearcutting with a lot of feeling on both sides of the issue. I would like to ask the Forest Service, do you have any plans in 1986 or 1987 to do any clearcutting in the Ouachita National Forest?

Mr. **Kelley**. Yes, sir. Our projection is 16,000 acres a year.

Mr. **Watkins**. When?

Mr. **Kelley**. Every year.

Mr. **Watkins**. I would like for your consideration for my request to ask you to withhold clearcutting until you have a directive.

And if not, I will put it into law. I don't know if you have had a directive handed down from the national office or somewhere to start clearcutting in the national forest.

Mr. **Kelley**. We have been using clearcuts for approximately 15 years, sir.

Mr. **Watkins**. I don't think it is out of line for me to ask you to hold back. I am putting that very mildly, Mr. Kelley.

Mr. **Kelley**. I will provide you the——

Mr. **Watkins**. We are trying to make a decision, and if I have to, we could encourage that no expenditures be used for clearcutting until we finally reach a designation one way or the other. I think there is a great deal of concern on both sides of the aisle on this issue.

I would say in closing that we have heard a lot of pros and cons. I think you can understand from the testimony. we didn't try to stifle anyone's opinion one way or the other on this particualr situation.

I haven't formally made a decision but I was taught growing up there is one column of advantages here and disadvantages there, and I am going to be weighing those very carefully as I do the research on this, because I do have a commitment to try to build opportunities for our people in this area of the State of Oklahoma.

I would like to think that we might be able to do a certain degree of both of the things that we talked about, and I would like to think there might be some type of workable compromise.

I would like to ask you, because I think we can all agree on one thing, and that can only be giving a hand of appreciation to Charlie Whitley for coming all the way from North Carolina to be here.

I want you to know I do appreciate from the depth of my heart that you would take time to come down here and help me in making the right decision.

So, I would turn it all back to you to do whatever you want to do.

Mr. **Whitley**. This concludes our business and the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

STATEMENT OF
G. W. KELLEY, DEPUTY FOREST SUPERVISOR
OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST
FOREST SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss proposals to add certain lands within the Ouachita National Forest in the State of Oklahoma to the National Wilderness Preservation System and the release of other lands to uses other than wilderness.

Four areas - - Black Fork Mountain, Upper Kiamichi River, Beech Creek, and Rich Mountain - - were first evaluated for their wilderness potential in RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation). This process started in June 1977, and identified areas of roadless and undeveloped land in all National Forests. The objective of RARE II was to determine which lands were best suited for wilderness and which lands were better suited for other uses.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement containing the recommendations for all National Forest System lands examined in RARE II, including those in Oklahoma, was released January 4, 1979 after review and comment by the public.

This Environmental Impact Statement recommended 16,300 acres for wilderness designation in two areas in LeFlore County Oklahoma - - Black Fork Mountain and Upper Kiamichi River.

In October 1982, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a California District Court decision that the RARE II Environmental Impact Statement was inadequate with regard to 46 specific areas in California. In February 1983, in view of the court's ruling, the Forest Service began a nationwide reevaluation of RARE II roadless areas that had not already been designated as wilderness or released for other uses by law. This reevaluation is part of the broad planning direction required by Congress in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

As a part of this planning effort all RARE II areas in Oklahoma were again reevaluated in 1983. Also ten additional areas, not included in the original RARE II inventory, were evaluated during the planning process. These ten areas were not recommended for wilderness consideration because past management activities, including existing roads, timber harvest and other developments seriously detracted from their wilderness character.

The results of the roadless area reevaluation for National Forest lands in Oklahoma were incorporated in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Forest Plan released for public comment March 15, 1985. The Proposed Forest Plan recommended Black Fork Mountain (5500 acres) and Upper Kiamichi River (10,090 acres) for wilderness designation. The Black Fork Mountain area is an addition to the existing Black Fork Wilderness in Arkansas. Beech Creek (11,225 acres) and Rich Mountain (5215 acres) were recommended for uses other than wilderness. The Beech Creek area was not recommended because 28 percent of the area is privately owned and portions of these private lands are accessible only by crossing portions of National Forest Land being considered for wilderness. The area has numerous roads and much evidence of past timber management activities. The Rich Mountain area is about one mile wide and is bounded on the south by the Talimena Scenic Drive and on the north by U.S. Highway 270 and the Kansas City Southern Railway. It was not recommended for wilderness because of the lack of topographic screening resulting in limited opportunities for solitude.

Public comment on the Proposed Forest Plan ended June 15, 1985. Based upon our review of public comments, no changes are anticipated in the recommendations for wilderness designation in the Final Plan for the Ouachita National Forest. We anticipate that the Final Plan and Environmental Impact Statement will be made available within the next few weeks.

This concludes my prepared statement. I will be glad to answer any questions the Committee members may have.

Statement of Fox Wood III, member, board of directors,
Le Flore County Conservation District

Chairman Whitley, Congressman Watkins ______________________

My name is Fox Wood III. I have been a resident of LeFlore County for more than 35 years. My wife and I live on and operate a farm and ranch near Spiro. For the past 16 years I have served as a publicly elected member of the board of directors of the LeFlore County Conservation District. During part of that time I served as chairman. I am here today at the request of our chairman, Mr. Charles Basham, to serve as the official spokesman for our district board. In this capacity I appear today to register our opposition to the establishment of wilderness sites in the Oklahoma portion of the Ouachita National Forest.

Our district comprises 724,000 acres in the northern part of LeFlore County. We have some 375,000 acres of public and private timberlands within the boundaries of our district, chiefly in the southern part. Two of the proposed wilderness sites, Black Fork Mountain and Rich Mountain are in our district. The other two sites adjoin us to the south and are located in the Talihina Conservation District. I have a letter with me today indicating their support for our position.

We oppose the establishment of these wilderness areas on many grounds.

1. Our first objection is that none of these areas qualify for wilderness designation according to the criteria set out in the federal act governing the establishment of such areas.

One of the often heard justifications for establishing wilderness areas is to save a part of the land so that our children and grandchildren can experience the joy of seeing the land just the way it was when great, great granddaddy first saw it. Well, this committee should keep firmly in mind that, in this instance, we are not talking about the priceless redwoods, a vanishing seashore, stands of beautiful virgin pine timber or endangered streams and rivers. These are not vast, pristine tracts of land that need quick and drastic action to preserve them for us and generations to come from the depredations of man.

We are considering arbitrarily selected pieces of forest land which have been logged over at least twice. With the possible exception of one, all have roads, trails, campsites and other obvious evidences of man's occupation and use.

Considering the present state of these tracts plus the time required for a natural return of the climax flora under wilderness conditions, our children and grandchildren had better be long lived because they are going to have to wait at least 300 or 400 years to see what great, great granddaddy saw.

There are many of us , however, who are not all that enthralled with what great, great granddaddy saw and we like some of the things he didn't see. He never saw Broken Bow, Pine Creek, Wister or Cedar Lakes. He never saw the Talimena Drive. He never saw a light bulb. But he saw an awful lot of a Georgia Stock at the south end of a north bound mule.

2. Our second objection is that the establishment of wilderness areas violates the multiple use concept which has been an invaluable and historic cornerstone of public land management policy. This concept simply means that the public lands shall be put to as many beneficial uses as possible commensurate with good stewardship.

We believe that livestock grazing, timber production, mineral development and recreation, including hunting, fishing and camping, are all acceptable uses when properly managed. Any arbitrary restriction of these and other acceptable practices solely for the benefit of a small group to the detriment of a much larger group represents, in our view, poor management of public lands.

3. Our third objection to wilderness areas is that they result in the loss of virtually all income from these public lands. LeFlore County has one of the lowest per capita incomes and one of the highest

unemployment rates in our state. The timber industry, the oil and gas industry and coal mining are major sources of jobs and income for the people of this area. Any action to establish areas where these activities are prohibited cancels present and future pay checks for people who need them most.

Timber sales from our national forests send millions and millions of dollars to our federal treasury and to county governments and school districts. Wilderness advocates like to bolster their cause by claiming little or no loss from the proposed sites because of low timber income. What they neglect to say, however, is that the low income is not a matter of adverse slopes or soils but rather a complete absence of management. I am sure members of this committee have seen instances where the same crop was planted on two similar adjoining fields with one outproducing the other by three or four fold. And the only difference was management.

Our district board recently spent an entire day visiting two of the proposed sites. We took trucks and all terrain four wheelers. We found that a significant portion of the Black Fork Mountain Area and a major portion of the Upper Kiamichi Area have the soils and slopes for major timber production should these areas be planted and managed with these goals in mind.

We also object to the ban on mineral exploration and development in wilderness areas. We have the capability to drill oil, gas, steam or carbon dioxide wells in downtown Oklahoma City, Ft. Smith, Arkansas or the middle of a national forest without damaging the environment. A wilderness area, however, is forever off limits for such activities. Never mind the prospect of literally millions of dollars in revenue for our federal treasury. Far fetched? Not at all! Just a few miles west of these proposed sites lie several of the nation's largest gas fields generating millions of dollers each year in gross production taxes for the State of Oklahoma. Only a few years ago some of our best petroleum geologists considered these areas very poor prospects for oil or gas production. And, for the most part, the deeper horizons there have yet to be explored.

Our board sees nothing wrong with the proper development of our natural resources throughout the Ouachita National Forest. And there is emphasis on the word, "proper". In the past there were unquestionably examples of poor management of our national forests. But now is not then. This is not great, great granddaddy's time. Now we have a whole battery of federal laws and regulations and we have the National Forest Service and other federal agencies in place to see that people abide by them. Our board sees no threat to these lands as they are now being managed by the Forest Service. One possible exception would be our recommendation that clear cutting not be practiced in the national forest.

4. We also vigorously object to the wilderness area restrictions that rule out the physical and chemical means that man has spent decades developing to control forest fires and timber insect and disease outbreaks. Such restrictions pose a potentially deadly threat for the spread of these forest scourges to adjoining public and private timber lands.

Someone here will surely hasten to remind me that the Wilderness Act provides that in emergencies the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize such measures as he may deem appropriate to deal with such situations. Anyone who believes that a request for such authorization could move up through government channels, back down again to the appropriate agency and be put into effect in time to meet the demands of the moment must surely believe in the tooth fairy. It is a shame that neither wilderness advocates nor government officials are likely to figure out a way to teach forest fires and the Southern Pine Bettle to respect wilderness boundary lines.

5. Our fifth objective to the unnecessary conversion of National Forest acres into wilderness areas is that it isn't fair. It's not fair for all of us to pay for the pleasures of a very few backpackers - young enough and strong enough and with free time to trek 5, 10 or 15 miles into and out of a wilderness area. For

wilderness areas minus roads, trails, campsites, picnic tables, privies, water, grills, litter cans and telephones are off limits to 98% of those of us who presently enjoy our national forests. There should be signs at every wilderness area that read, "Take your picnic basket, your camper, your boat and your foliage tour and move out! You are not welcome here!" And there should be an additional line on the sign that says, "But you are still required to pay the tax bills to maintain these areas and make up the deficits created when all income from these places is reduced to near zero"!

6. Our sixth objection is that most of the people in Southeastern Oklahoma don't want these wilderness areas. These families who have hunted, fished, picnicked and camped in this forest area for generations know better than anyone in Oklahoma City or Tulsa that you don't have to destroy roads and trails and drastically limit access to preserve trees, fish, wildlife and clear lakes and streams. They resent the creation of mountains of misinformation regarding the endless stream of tourist dollars that will flow to local merchants from a nebulous army of back packers and wilderness lovers. These ridiculous assumptions come from urban based association executives and state officials who are very well paid to dream up these projections. Our evalation of these estimates is, "Baloney"! The people of this area know that out of every 100 tourists that come here about 98 want to picnic or camp conveniently, do a little hunting or fishing, see the redbud and dogwood in the spring and the foliage in the fall. And they aren't looking to hike 5 to 10 miles to do any of these things. What they would like is more access, not less. They have about as much interest in a back pack as they have in a rattlesnake.

A few months ago our board circulated petitions in this area to support our position. These wern't shotgun mailings paid for by dues from some big organization. They were hand carried free by volunteers or supervised by small businessmen in their establishments. In a few days we collected over 1500 signatures from people who live here. With few exceptions, the signatures are accompanied by an address and an occupation. In our written presentation to your committee you will find copies of these petitions.

Another item of interest to your committee. Yesterday, at its regular business meeting our Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to oppose the establishment of any wilderness areas in LeFlore County.

A long time state legislator who represented the area encompassed by these wilderness proposals recently retired. He was majority leader at the time. Recently, he told me that not once during his tenure was he approached by local people to support any wilderness areas.

From these comments the committe may infer that our board has some sort of aversion to those who like to hike and fish and camp in remote areas. This is most certainly not the case. We would welcome and encourage these people to visit this part of Oklahoma. We simply feel that the numbers in this category are small and that they do not warrent the removal of thousands of acres of public forest land from the use and enjoyment of the vast majority for the sole benefit of a very few. It should be noted here that in the Arkansas portion of the Ouachita there are already some 50,000 acres set aside as wilderness. Several of these areas adjoin Oklahoma and all are easily accessible to Oklahomans. In addition, there is the 2000 acre Kerr Arboretum near the Talimena Drive. It is managed as a wilderness area and is open to all for hiking, camping and hunting.

The ironic thing about this whole matter, Mr. Chairman, is that, for the most part, the Ouachita National Forest in its present state is a virtual wilderness. If I could blindfold every member of your committee and your staff and transport you to almost any part of this million and a half acre forest, remove your blindfold and ask you where you were, almost without exception your first comment would be, "Good Heavens"! I'm in a wilderness"! And you'd be right. There are countless areas in this forest where you can go today and hike and camp, hunt and fish for days without seeing another human being. And there is little prospect that this will change. The Forest Service has no intention of building an endless network of roads into every part of the forest, although additional access would be welcomed by most people.

I guess, Mr. Chairman, that our board's position boils down to a familiar saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"!

We would like to express our appreciation to this committee for coming to our area and conducting this hearing. We want to thank you for the opportunity to be here and express our views.

Weyerhaeuser Company
Mid-South Region
Star Route Box 100
Wright City, Oklahoma 74766-0100
(405) 981-2211

January 6, 1986

Congressman Wes Watkins
Third District
118 Federal Building
McAlester, OK 74501

Dear Congressman Watkins:

Re: Wilderness Area Testimony on 1-7-86 - Poteau, OK

Please add this letter to the records of the hearing that involve the Wilderness Area issue in Oklahoma involving portions of the U.S. Forest Service Land.

In my role as Western Land Manager for Weyerhaeuser Company's Oklahoma/Arkansas land, I am responsible for land use, land acquisitions and land disposals on the Western part of our 1.8MM acres of privately owned timberlands. Weyerhaeuser Company's existance in Oklahoma alone, directly affects the livelihood of the 150 employees in my organization, plus hundreds more who work in our converting facilities. Their employment depends on a steady and perpetual fiber and solid wood flow from our forests.

Let me say up front, that I am not opposed to more wilderness areas for Oklahoma, nor is Weyerhaeuser Company. We have consistently held that position. We are interested in the quality, location, and qualifications of the additional wilderness areas. As well as the intelligent management of the National Forests as a whole, (The People's Forest).

Weyerhaeuser Company has a responsibility to its' stock holders to manage and utilize its land in a responsible manner and for a profit. We are no different than any rancher or farmer trying to manage his farm or ranch. They also manage and strive for a profit.

Weyerhaeuser Company commends you for your efforts to move this wilderness issue toward a satisfactory conclusion, and emphasize our firm belief that the wilderness issue should be and can be put to rest.

Consequently, we would strongly support renewed efforts, led by you, to draft a reasonable compromise so as to finally settle the Wilderness Debate. We believe that the interests of all Oklahoma citizens will best be served not through continued argument, but through settlement.

Weyerhaeuser Company believed earlier as we also do now, that the recommendation of the extensive and elaborate studies established by congress known as the RARE II process with its definitions, screening, and enormous public input will best define and identify quality wilderness areas.

One of Weyerhaeuser Company's concerns, which is of concern to any and all land owners when a major land use decision or change is about to take place on his adjoining land. That concern is his use of and/or restrictions of his rights to use and continue his normal operating activities on the areas immediately joining a wilderness area boundary.

In summary, Weyerhaeuser Company has tried to make it clear, that we do endorse additional wilderness areas for Oklahoma. Our preference is for quality wilderness areas as represented in the existing wilderness areas we now have and the additional acres in Oklahoma that was identified and subsequently passed the RARE II process. The two proposed areas that I know of that qualified are Black Fork Mountain and the upper Kiamichi River.

Robert Timmer
Oklahoma/Arkansas Acquisition Mgr.

kc

xc: File
George Bledsoe
Monty Dishongh

Balentine

POSITION STATEMENT

LEFLORE COUNTY WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION, LEFLORE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Public Hearing January 7, 1986
Carl Albert Junior College, Poteau, Oklahoma

Introduction

The LeFlore County Wilderness Association proposes the addition of the following four areas in the Ouachita National Forest to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Black Fork Mountain Roadless Area, Upper Kiamichi River Roadless Area, Rich Mountain Roadless Area and Beech Creek Roadless Area. With vast areas of Southeastern Oklahoma being converted to pine plantation or pasture, it makes sense to set aside a small portion of our forests to be managed by nature. Areas where hunting, camping, hiking, fishing and nature study would be allowed but logging, development and motorized travel would be prohibited. These are the last mountainous, roadless and unspoiled forest areas of our state; and we feel that as such they should be preserved in their natural state for the enjoyment and enrichment of present and future generations.

Issues

After much research and thought it is the opinion of the LeFlore County Wilderness Association that the greatest value of these four areas to the people of our area and of our state would come through wilderness designation. This opinion is based on the following information concerning these issues: economy, wildlife conservation, education and recreation.

Economy. Economic analysis shows that no significant negative economic impact will result because of wilderness designation. The National Forest Service projects a loss of less than $.011 per acre if the Black Fork Mountain Roadless Area and Upper Kiamichi Roadless Area receive wilderness designation and a loss of less than $.02 per acre if all the roadless areas receive wilderness designation. The National Forest Service also finds that effect on employment would be negligible. In a Ouachita National Forest news bulletin dated November 7, 1983, the following description is given each of the four areas concerning mineral producing potential: "There are no producing mines or fields and no proven reserves. Potential is low for oil and gas, hard rock and low-value bulk material production."

In a study by the State of Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department completed in 1984, it was found that the economic gain if the proposed areas were designated as wilderness would amount to about $1.7 million; and a study done in 1985 projected a positive economic impact of about $2.4 million.

The following statistics concerning revenue from Ouachita National Forest received by LeFlore County over the years 1971-84 will be enlightening when we take into consideration that all four of these areas have effectively been treated as wilderness since 1978.

Year	Revenue Received by LeFlore County
1971	$ 67,096
1972	104,212
1973	118,060
1974	118,172
1975	98,886
1976	208,188
1977	335,292
1978	371,664
1979*	425,624
1980*	498,350
1981*	418,249
1982*	231,252
1983*	578,301
1984*	640,758

*Four areas were set aside during these years.

Obviously, setting aside these four areas had no significant negative effect on the income received by LeFlore County.

We concur with the Department of Tourism that "the long-term gains of wilderness designation and management can be shown to outweigh the short-term commitments of timber management."

Wildlife Conservation. From a biological standpoint, several unique species of vertebrates occur in these areas. Perhaps the most notable is the rare Rich Mountain salamander, which occurs only in this vicinity and in a very small area in western Arkansas. The Kiamichi shiner is another relatively rare species which occurs in the upper Kiamichi River area. These areas will also provide a refuge for the black bear and possibly the eastern cougar from encroachment of an intolerant populace. These areas with their mixed hardwood stands of timber would provide food and shelter for the species of wildlife that need older growth forest, species of wildlife that are diminishing due to high-yield forestry practices. Additionally, several unique and diverse plant communities occur on these areas.

In the early part of this century when deer and turkey had all but disappeared from eastern Oklahoma the only remanents survived in the most remote mountainous areas, areas exactly like the four areas under discussion. Wilderness designation of the four areas will benefit wildlife and provide a future for some species that might otherwise not survive.

Education. The Upper Kiamichi River, Black Fork Mountain, Rich Mountain and Beech Creek are an important part of Oklahoma's wilderness heritage and ties with the land. These are four of the last remaining areas in our state that are relatively undeveloped. They are a key to our ecological past and a gateway to its future. If these four areas receive the wilderness status, they will become a living laboratory by which scientists of the present and future can measure the positive or negative impact of man on his environment. They will serve as a standard to which other altered environments can be compared.

As population pressures increase, areas like these will become all the more important as refuges to be sought out for solitude, knowledge and inspiration.

Recreation. All four areas have a tremendous recreational potential for hunting, camping, hiking and nature study with Upper Kiamichi and Beech Creek providing additional opportunity to enjoy recreational activities associated with clear mountain streams. There are seven miles of hiking trails in the Upper Kiamichi Roadless Area and an established hiking trail along Beech Creek in the Beech Creek Roadless Area.

Rich Mountain and Upper Kiamichi are seperated by the Talimena Scenic Drive and are enjoyed each year by thousands of people who are exhilarated by the panoramic view afforded by the towering pine-hardwood forests and plunging mountain valleys.

As the population of our state continues to increase and the need for recreational land grows more critical, we will more fully appreciate areas of this type being available.

Conclusions

We must keep in mind that National Forest lands belong to the people of this nation and do not exist for the primary benefit of any particular industry or group. A statement made by Gifford Pinchot, the First Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, aptly describes the relationship between the people and their National Forest lands. He said, "National Forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them run."

The people have clearly stated what they want done concerning wilderness designation for these four areas. In a survey taken in 1983 by the U.S. Forest Service to determine public sentiment about wilderness designation for these areas the following results were obtained:

Area	Responses or Signatures	For Wilderness	For Non Wilderness
Black Fork Mountain	1369	1186--87%	133--13%
Upper Kiamichi	1386	1187--86%	199--14%
Rich Mountain	609	410--67%	199--33%
Beech Creek	503	374--74%	129--26%

(Note: There were 736 responses or signatures suggesting further planning for Beech Creek.)

Recently a survey was sent to each home in LeFlore County concerning wilderness designation of Black Fort Mountain, Rich Mountain, Upper Kiamichi and Beech Creek with responses to be sent to the LeFlore County Wilderness Association. Approximately 170 responses were received as a result of this survey with only one respondent stating that he was against the wilderness designation of these four areas.

Most LeFlore County residents are very appreciative of the National Forest land that is within the boundary of their county, and many of them are frequent visitors to these lands. We grew up enjoying the many recreational activities afforded by the streams and woodlands of the beautiful Ouachita National Forest, and we want our children and grandchildren to be able to continue to enjoy and know the forest as we have. With the onslaught of high-yield forestry techniques and population growth, the mixed pine-hardwood forests of Eastern Oklahoma are changing into pine plantations and pastures and it is our strong feeling that the time to set aside these four areas in their relatively natural and unspoiled condition is NOW. We can thereby share with future generations a part of the heritage with which our generation has been so richly blest.

OKLAHOMA TOURISM AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT POSITION REGARDING PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS WITHIN THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST

January 10, 1986

I am Tom Creider of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and am representing Mr. Abe Hesser, the Executive Director of our agency.

The following comments represent the views of the Department and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission regarding the proposed wilderness areas within the Ouachita National Forest.

What Kind of Recreational Demand Can Be Expected for Wilderness In Oklahoma?

The 1985 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) telephone survey consisted of a 1400 instate stratified random sample and was conducted by the Center for Economic and Management Research under the guidance of Dr. Neil Dikeman, Associate Director. The size of the sample was chosen based upon a confidence interval of 95 percent and a sampling error of approximately ± 5 percent. The sample was stratified by county according to population with no county having less than 10 respondents.

Data originating from this survey indicates that 10.7% of Oklahoma's households participated in backpacking/camping in primitive areas. The SCORP survey also indicates that 22.1% of Oklahomans enjoy dayhiking, 7.9% participate in nature photography, 50.6% fish, 24.3% hunt, and 21.8% participate in horseback riding. All these activities are permissible with wilderness designation and serves as an indication of the multiple and active use of wilderness land.

The State of Arkansas in 1984 projected a 15% increase in visitation and participation in wilderness recreation as a result of RARE II wilderness designation.

What Kind of Economic Impact Will This Kind of Use Result In?

Results from the 1985 SCORP telephone survey found the average expenditure for each trip whose purpose was to participate in backpacking/camping in primitive areas to be $83.41 per trip. I stated before that 10.7% of Oklahoma's households participate in backpacking/camping in primitive areas. Using 1984 estimates of number of households, there are then 134,689 households in Oklahoma that participate in some form of backpacking/camping in primitive areas at least once a year. With a conservative estimate that only 25% of the households visit a wilderness area a year in Oklahoma, the total annual economic impact from backpackers and campers of primitive areas alone would be $2.8 million.

Does the Department See Any Other Benefits Coming From This Area Being Designated as Wilderness?

A research document completed by our National Heritage Program staff titled "Significant National Features of Rich Mountain and Black Fork Mountain, Ouachita National Forest", stated that the unique environment of these proposed wilderness areas are distinguished by the presence of not only species of plants and animals native to the Ouachita Mountains, but also by the presence of several species known only to occur inside these boundaries. Outstanding examples of mesophytic oak-hickory forest, and American beech forest are found nowhere else in the state. As the headwaters of the Kiamichi River, these areas support exceptionally diverse molluscan fauna downstream, including two species under review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In closing: Wilderness in Oklahoma has a positive growth potential. The lack of sufficient areas available for a self-guided or overnight wilderness experience sends millions of dollars in travel and tourism out-of-state. The physical character of the proposed wilderness areas which have deterred commercial use in the past is the most cherished and prized asset for wilderness designation. While these areas should become designated wilderness on physical and preservation issues alone, they also can meet the most critical cost effective analysis with positive results.

Based on the recommendation of the Oklahoma Trails Advisory Council, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission on April 22, 1982, went on record as supporting the designation of wilderness areas within the Ouachita National Forest. We urge Congressman Watkins to add his support to the designation of these wilderness areas.

Oklahoma Wildlife Federation
State Affiliate National Wildlife Federation
4545 LINCOLN BLVD., SUITE 171 OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. 73105 (405) 524-7009

STATEMENT OF THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
ON PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS IN THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST
TO THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREST, FARMS, AND ENERGY

CARL ALBERT JUNIOR COLLEGE
POTEAU, OKLAHOMA
JANUARY 7, 1986

THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION IS EXTREMELY PLEASED TO PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S WILDERNESS HEARING. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR 11,000 MEMBERS AND 41 AFFILIATED CLUBS IN THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA.

THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION, THE STATE AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION, IS MADE UP OF FISHERMEN, HUNTERS, CAMPERS, HIKERS, BIRDWATCHERS, AND OTHER CONSERVATIONISTS FROM ALL OF OKLAHOMA. MY NAME IS RICK JAMESON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION.

THROUGHOUT OUR 36 YEAR HISTORY, WE HAVE STRIVED TO PROVIDE A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR ALL OKLAHOMANS TO ENJOY. WE ARE A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR DESIGNATING A PORTION OF THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST AS A WILDERNESS AREA AND ARE HAPPY TO SEE THAT CONGRESS MAY BE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION.

THE SETTING ASIDE OF SOME WILDERNESS NEEDS TO HAPPEN SOON BECAUSE MUCH OF SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA HAS BEEN RADICALLY CHANGED IN THE LAST CENTURY.

THE STATE'S POPULATION GREW FROM 2 MILLION TO 3.2 MILLION RESIDENTS FROM 1970 TO TODAY. IT IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO 4 MILLION BY THE FAST APPROACHING YEAR 2000. THIS GROWTH HAS SPURRED MUCH DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASED USAGE OF OUR EASTERN OKLAHOMA FORESTS.

LARGE SCALE CLEAR-CUTTING HAS CONVERTED MUCH OF OUR MIXED PINE/HARDWOOD FORESTS TO PINE PLANTATIONS. FORESTRY ROADS HAVE LITERALLY CRISSCROSSED EVERY SECTION OF LAND AND EVERY MOUNTAINSIDE IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA, INCREASING WILDLIFE POACHING AND ADDING TONS OF MUD TO OUR SMALLMOUTH BASS STREAMS. INCREASED HERBICIDE USAGE TO CONTROL HARDWOODS, A PART OF TODAY'S "INTENSIVE FORESTRY", HAS ALSO

CHANGED THE ECOLOGY OF OKLAHOMA'S WOODLANDS. THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF NATIVE FOREST HAVE ALSO BEEN CLEARED AND CONVERTED TO CATTLE PASTURES.

THE CHANCE TO TRULY "GET AWAY" FROM THE HUSTLES AND STRESSES OF THE MODERN SOCIETY IS RARE IN OKLAHOMA. ROADLESS AREAS IN THIS PART OF THE STATE HAVE BECOME THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE. MANY OF OUR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS ENJOY THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT UNDISTRUBED FORESTLANDS FOR BACKPACKING, OBSERVING WILDLIFE AND WILDFLOWERS, HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING. ABOVE ALL, THEY WANT THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN TO HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE THIS FORM OF RECREATION. WITHOUT WILDERNESS DESGNATION THERE WILL BE NO CHOICE FOR THEM. WE ARE ASKING THE CONGRESS TO SAVE A SMALL PART OF OUR STATE FROM THE ENCROACHMENT OF COMMERCIAL, ACTIVITIES. THESE FOUR AREAS OR 26,000 ACRES REPRESENT ONLY ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT OF THE AVAILABLE TIMBER PRODUCING ACRES IN SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA. THERE WILL REMAIN NEARLY 5,000,000 ACRES OF POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL TIMBER AREAS FOR NON-WILDERNESS DEVELOPMENT.

FOR THESE REASONS, WE WOULD LIKE TO GO ON RECORD AS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED WILDERNESS DESIGNATION IN LEFLORE COUNTY. SPECIFICALLY, WE FEEL THAT ALL FOUR AREAS UNDER CONSIDERATION, THE BEECH CREEK AREAS (#08086), THE UPPER KIAMICHI AREA (#08005), THE BLACK FORK MOUNTAIN SECTION (#08084) AND THE RICH MOUNTAIN UNIT (#08085) SHOULD ALL BE INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM.

THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE FEDERATION RECENTLY SURVEYED OVER 50,000 OKLAHOMANS ON THIS SUBJECT. SUPPORT WAS OVERWHELMING FOR PROTECTING THE 26,000 ACRES THROUGH WILDERNESS DESIGNATION. BY A 14 to 1 RATIO, RESPONDENTS FAVORED THE IDEA. I'VE ENCLOSED A COPY OF THE SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE COMMITTEE'S REVIEW. THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ARE NOT SURPRISING, CONGRESSMEN, FOR OKLAHOMA IS A STATE EXTREMELY POOR IN PUBLIC LANDS. SOME NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THIS STATE I S IN PRIVATE OWNERSHIP. LESS THAN THREE PERCENT IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC RECREATION. OUR PARKS AND WILDLIFE AREAS ARE OVERRUN BY OKLAHOMANS SEEKING PLACES TO CAMP, FISH AND HUNT.

WE CAN'T COME TO YOU WITH WILDERNESS PROPOSALS LIKE ARKANSAS AND TEXAS FOR AREAS OF 100,000 ACRES OR MORE. AND WE CERTAINLY AREN'T ASKING FOR 26,000 ACRES IN HOPES OF GETTING A "COMPROMISE" AREA OF 10 - 15,000 ACRES. NOR IS THIS A "FOOT IN THE DOOR" PROPOSAL WHERE FIRST WE'LL ASK FOR 26,000 ACRES AND THEN LATER WANT TO EXPAND IT TO 50,000 OR 100,000 ACRES.

26,000 ACRES IS THE ENTIRE AMOUNT IDENTIFIED BY THE FOREST SERVICE AS SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS UNDER THE FEDERAL WILDERNESS ACT.

WE HAVE NOTHING TO COMPROMISE AND WE HAVE PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME TO WAIT. EITHER WE SET ASIDE THESE LAST REMAINING REMNANTS OF EASTERN OKLAHOMA FOREST OR WE'VE LOST THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESERVE THE PART OF OUR NATURAL HERITAGE FOREVER.

FROM ANOTHER STANDPOINT, WE FEEL THAT WILDERNESS DESIGNATION WOULD PROVE TO BE AN ECONOMIC PLUS FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND THE STATE OVERALL. MR. HESSER FROM THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND RECREATION HAS TOLD US THAT WILDERNESS DESIGNATION COULD BRING 1.7 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR TO OUR ECONOMY. WE FEEL THAT THESE FIGURES COULD BE CONSERVATIVE, SINCE RECREATIONISTS IN THIS PART OF THE U.S. HAVE FEW WILDERNESS OPPORTUNITIES.

CONGRESSMAN WATKINS HAS REPEATEDLY EXHIBITED A DESIRE TO USE HIS DISTRICT'S EXCELLENT NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE BETTERMENT OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY. WILDERNESS DESIGNATION OF AT LEAST 26,000 ACRES OF THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST WILL BE A WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR CONSERVATIONISTS AND THE CONGRESSMAN'S DESIRE TO FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH.

OKLAHOMA'S TWO MAINSTAY INDUSTRIES, OIL AND AGRICULTURE, ARE IN TROUBLE. WE WOULD BE WISE TO ENSURE QUALITY RECREATION AREAS FOR OUR DEVELOPING TOURISM INDUSTRY. BUILDING THIS UNDERDEVELOPED INDUSTRY IS THE KIND OF ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION THAT OKLAHOMA SORELY NEEDS.

WE'VE HEARD BY SOME THAT THIS PROPOSAL MIGHT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF JOBS AND INCOME TO LEFLORE COUNTY. SUCH CLAIMS ARE UNWARRANTED.

THE PROPOSED AREAS REPRESENT SOME OF THE POOREST TIMBER, FROM A COMMERCIAL STANDPOINT, AND ARE INSIGNIFICANT IN THE FOREST SERVICE'S TIMBER MANAGEMENT PLANS. IN FACT, THESE AREAS ARE GENERALLY STEEP SLOPED, ROCKY AND WITH LITTLE MERCHANTABLE TIMBER. LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OFF THE ENTIRE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST.

SOME THINK THAT HUNTING AND CAMPING WILL BE PROHIBITED WHICH OF COURSE IS WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THIS WILL PROVIDE QUALITY HUNTING WITHOUT THE DISTURBANCE OF VEHICLES. CAMPING WILL CONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED IN THESE AREAS, AND OF COURSE, THERE ARE SEVERAL FOREST SERVICE DEVELOPED CAMPGROUNDS NEAR THE PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS. RATHER THAN DENY OPPORTUNITY, THE WILDERNESS DESIGNATION WILL PRESERVE THE OUTSTANDING SCENERY THAT DRAWS MANY PEOPLE TO TAKE A DRIVE ON THE TALIMENA DRIVE AND OTHER HIGHWAYS THAT BRING TOURISTS TO VIEW THE KIAMICHI MOUNTAINS.

IT HAS ALSO BEEN INCORRECTLY STATED THAT WILDERNESS DESIGNATINON WOULD MEAN CONDEMNATION OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF PRIVATE LAND. THE WILDERNESS DESIGNATION ONLY INVOLVES CHANGING THE DESIGNATION OF EXISTING FOREST SERVICE LAND AND REQUIRES NOT ONE ACRE OF CONDEMNATION.

THE FOREST SERVICE HAS NO SUCH AUTHORITY TO TAKE LAND WITHOUT JUST COMPENSATION.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT A TRACT OF LAND IN MCCURTAIN COUNTY, THE MCCURTAIN COUNTY WILDERNESS AREA SERVES THE NEEDS OF WILDERNESS ADVOCATES AND THUS WE NEED NO ADDITIONAL AREAS. THE MCCURTAIN COUNTY AREA IS NOT PART OF THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS SYSTEM. IT DOES NOT ALLOW CAMPING OR HUNTING NOR DOES IT PROVIDE ANY APPRECIABLE RECREATION. THE STATE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT, WHICH CONTROLS IT, USES IT MAINLY FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

THE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN CRITICISED BECAUSE SOME SAY IT WOULD DECREASE WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT. THIS MIGHT BE A PROBLEM IF WE WERE

TALKING ABOUT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES BUT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 4 RELATIVELY SMALL TRACTS. MUCH OF THE WILDLIFE IN THESE AREAS CAN AND WILL USE ADJACENT AREAS. IT'S REALLY A MATTER OF BALANCE. WHILE NONMANAGED WILDERNESS WOULD MAKE UP APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT OF THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST, THE OTHER 90 PERCENT IS AVAILABLE FOR WILDLIFE FOOD PLOTS, TIMBER HARVEST, MODERN, DEVELOPED CAMPGROUNDS, AND OTHER USES. SPECIES THAT BENEFIT FROM YOUNG FORESTS AND TIMBER HARVEST HAVE 90 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL FOREST AND MOST OF THE REST OF EASTERN OKLAHOMA. SPECIES THAT BENEFIT FROM MATURE FORESTS WILL BENEFIT FROM WILDERNESS. THE WILDERNESS AREA WILDLIFE AND HUNTERS WILL BENEFIT BY ENJOYING PROTECTION FROM POACHING AND DISTRUBANCE FROM VEHICLES.

IN SUMMARY, WE WISH TO THANK YOU FOR HOLDING THIS WILDERNESS HEARING IN OKLAHOMA.

WE BELIEVE ESTABLISHING A 25,000 ACRE WILDERNESS WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO LEFLORE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA AND TO THIS REGION.

WE ENCOURAGE CONGRESS TO ACT NOW TO PRESERVE THIS SMALL REMNANT OF NATURAL OKLAHOMA FOREST LAND.

AND WHILE OUR MAIN INTEREST IS A BELIEF THAT IT IS WISE AND PROPER TO PRESERVE REPRESENTATIVE NATURAL AREAS AND PROVIDE QUALITY WILDERNESS RECREATION FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS, IT IS ALSO OUR BELIEF THAT ESTABLISHING A WILDERNESS AREA IN OKLAHOMA WILL COMPLIMENT A GROWING OKLAHOMA TOURISM ECONOMY, THAT PRESENTLY LACKS A SIGNIFICANT WILDERNESS AREA.

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING OUR COMMENTS. WE'LL LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOUR COMMITTEE IN ADVANCING A WILDERNESS PROPOSAL FOR OKLAHOMA.

(Attachment follows:)

Results of 1985 Wildlife Survey - Random Sampling compiled by Kevin McCurdy for G Stout

1985
OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS

You may record your answers by putting a check in the appropriate box. Please complete the entire survey form and return within 14 days to Oklahoma Wildlife Federation. 4545 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 171, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

PART I: LAND FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT AND PUBLIC HUNTING, FISHING & TRAPPING

Currently, the Wildlife Department manages about 2 percent of Oklahoma for wildlife. Meanwhile, much wildlife habitat is being lost due to development and intensive forestry and agriculture. The current funding of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, even with the recent increase in fees has almost no money for purchase of additional land. The following questions relate to whether such a program needs to be started and how it should be funded.

1. Do you favor the ODWC purchasing more habitat for public hunting, fishing, and trapping?
   ☐ Yes 82% ☐ No 11% ☐ Undecided 6%
2. Presently, sportsmen over 65 and under 16 years of age are exempted from purchasing hunting and fishing licenses. These exemptions cost our state wildlife program hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funds given to the states according to the number of licenses sold each year. Would you support creation of a $2 license for those over 65 or under 16 with the money to be earmarked for purchase of additional public wildlife areas?
   ☐ Yes 65% ☐ No 29% ☐ Undecided 6%
3. Currently the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation puts the vast majority of its fisheries effort into stocking and managing reservoirs while ponds and streams receive less attention. Please give us your input on the following:
   The ODWC should put more effort into pond management?
   ☐ Yes 38% ☐ No 38% ☐ Undecided 21%
   The ODWC should put more effort into stream access and management?
   ☐ Yes 71% ☐ No 12% ☐ Undecided 14%

PART II: CURRENT ISSUES

1. The Corps of Engineers is currently studying the possibility of a dam on the Glover River, the last free flowing river in southeastern Oklahoma.
   Would you support keeping the Glover river free flowing?
   ☐ Yes 78% ☐ No 9% ☐ Undecided 13%
2. A citizen task force appointed by Senator Don Nickles and representing the local Chamber of Commerce, cattlemen, county commissioners, the Osage Tribe, and the Wildlife Federation recently recommended that a 50,000 acre National Tall Grass Prairie Preserve be created in Osage County.
   Do you support the creation of a National Tall Grass Prairie Preserve?
   ☐ Yes 76% ☐ No 12% ☐ Undecided 12%

3. A coalition of various conservation and sportsmens groups have recommended that approximately 26,000 acres of the 240,000 acre Ouachita National Forest in eastern Oklahoma be managed as a Wilderness Area. This allows hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing, but prohibits timber harvest, mineral development, and vehicular access.

   Do you support this wilderness area?

   ☐ Yes 86% ☐ No 6% ☐ Undecided 6%

4. The Oklahoma State Senate recently passed a resolution against transferring Black Kettle National Grasslands and Rita Blanca National Grasslands (Cimmaron County) from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

   Do you believe Black Kettle and Rita Blanca should remain under the management of the Forest Service?

   ☐ Yes 56% ☐ No 9% ☐ Undecided 29%

Comments: ____________________

PART III: INVOLVEMENT

( ) I would be interested in getting involved in the following issues (Circle your interests).
canoeing, fishing, clean air, clean water, hunting, wilderness,
tall grass prairie, bottle bill, oil and toxic pollution,
herbicides/pesticides, other ____________________

( ) Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to help the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation.
☐ $10 ☐ $15 ☐ $30 ☐ $50 ☐ Other $ ________

THANK YOU

STATEMENT OF GENE H. WHITE, PRESIDENT
OF BURNETT LUMBER COMPANY, INC.
BEFORE THE
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
POTEAU, OKLAHOMA
JANUARY 7, 1986

My family and I reside in Heavener, Oklahoma here in Leflore County. I have owned and operated a lumber manufacturing plant in Heavener, Oklahoma for more than twenty years and am currently retired and involved in investments. I am an avid fisherman, do some hunting and in general utilize and appreciate the outdoors.

Gentlemen, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to conduct this hearing on the wilderness designation issue in our National Forest here in Leflore County, Oklahoma. I think it is especially helpful that y ou have convened this hearing in Poteau, so that we may more conveniently and directly speak to you on this important issue effecting our county and our area of the State of Oklahoma.

I offer the following along with the attached seventeen reasons why I oppose wilderness designation in Leflore County, Oklahoma.

Congressman Watkins has for all his tenure of office worked for industrial development within his congressional area. He has made few decisions while in office without this issue being involved in one way or another. Congressman Watkins was quoted recently during the announcing of an energy plant in this county as saying, "The economic impact of the new energy plant going in East of Panama will be staggering". "The AES plant would be a catalyst for economic and job development in Southeast Oklahoma.". "The economic and job development potential from coal and other industries are the major reasons we have been working with Red-Ark Development to save the Rock Island Railroad in the heart of this potential coal development area". End Quote.

If the industrial development context of my talk sounds out of place at a wilderness designation hearing, I ask your indulgence. With the clean air act of 1977 and its amendments and all other acts and amendments applying to our environment with special emphasis for designated wilderness areas, we could be in trouble. We know that any area within many miles of the designated wilderness area is effected by rules applying to that wilderness area.

The effect of these regulations has the potential of stopping any and all industrial development in this area forever. We cannot have industrial development without in some way altering the air, water or environment. The designation of this wilderness area makes us less competitive than other communities located greater distances from these areas. Whether by act, amendment to those acts, regulations or by the delaying action of hundreds of frivolous lawsuits filed by preservationist groups makes no difference. It still has the potential of stopping industrial development of our area of Oklahoma

Washington beaurocrats seem to work overtime in the creation of ill-conceived proposed legislation that will wreck havoc on our business community. How in the world does this ill-advised legislation even get to the "proposed stage" is beyond my imagination. Do our congressional representatives really understand the ramifications of destroying any part of the basic foundation of the Forest Products Industry- the only readily renewable resource based industry that we have? I refer you to items 2,3,4,5,11,12, 15 and 16 of reasons I am opposed to wilderness designation.

We are observing a continuous exodus of people to urban population centers. Seventy percent of our United States citizens live on two percent of the land. Rural areas contain one-third of the population, half the poverty, two-thirds of the sub-standard housing, yet receive only one-fourth the income. How many of us have watched our home town populations dwindle? When a new industry does build in a rural area, it barely supplies jobs for those already in the community.

Underpopulated small towns are becoming less able to provide needed services. Yet we know that people will go to the jobs. If we put jobs in the cities, they will come. If we put jobs in smaller communities, they will come. They will build homes and build up the services that the town offers and revive that small town.

The big frustration in the environmental cause vs. jobs battle has been that those who are being hurt seem to have no recourse under the law. It sometimes seems that any ding-a-ling can stop the economic activity on which forested areas depend, but those who are being hurt-particularly those who are being put out of work have no way of fighting back.

It is my desire that those people with preservationist ideas living in cities and areas outside of ours, not help place restrictions on us that prevents our growth by promoting the designation of these wilderness areas.

When one guy's job is at stake and the other guy seemingly will not play fair, you have to mix it up a little. I guess that is why we are here today.

Frivolous, unnecessary lawsuits by wilderness groups have effectively prevented the protection and preservation of wilderness areas and the protection of all areas joining and surrounding those areas. Regardless of the words of the act and it's amendments, these lawsuits stall or prevent action for years. The lawsuits have a way of delaying action until the taking of action to save the forest and wilderness areas is no longer important because it is too late to save either.

Item #3 in my reasons opposed to wilderness designation relates to the US Forest Service not being able to protect the land from fire and insects. In the summer of 1985, the southern pine beetle reached epidemic proportions in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. The salvageing of damaged timber has flooded the timber market with damaged timber. A U.S. District Court Judge has prohibited cutting of buffer strips around Wilderness areas infested with the southern pine beetle, drastically hindering US Forest Service efforts to contain the pest. According to Judge Gerhard A. Gesell, the Forest Service failed to complete the environmental impact statements required under the National Environmental Policy Act. Wilderness areas in Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana are effected by the ruling. However, Gesell did permit the cutting if the beetle was encroaching on colonies of the red cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species. He said that cutting of buffer strips was not a "scientifically" proven method of control, but "common sense would seem to suggest" it would have some effect, and therefore allowed cutting "immediately around a colony" of the endangered bird.

This type of ruling is the reason I speak today. This type of ruling has haunted professional foresters for more than 20 years. This tragedy in these states has been repeated numerous times on millions of acres throughout the nation.

This dogged adherence by preservation groups to their principle of "nature knows best" has destroyed homes, watersheds, wildlife habitats and valuable timber. And for What?

Nature is neither benign as some believe nor as fragile as they would have us believe. When a natural disaster occurs, preservationist interests counter with statements about nature's great powers of recuperation. Yet when similarly confronted with developments by man, they speak of the "irreversible" damage which will result. They can't have it both ways. Or can they?

Can you imagine your chances if your own local fire department had to go through the same regulations to put out a fire in your home as the US Forest Service must to put out a fire in or around a disignated wilderness area. The consequences are too gross to imagine.

Wildlife Federation and Wilderness societies would speak of the peacefulness and serenity found in the designated areas. Where you never here the roar of an engine or the closing of the door of our vehicles. In a designated wilderness, you will not even have to hear the squeaking of the wheel of a wheelchair. The disabled cannot get to and utilize these areas. These same Wildlife Federation members do not mind disturbing the peacefulness and serenity of others whith the crack of rifle shot or the screams of wounded animals. This group will tell of the necessity to "harvest" the animals for their own good . To "Harvest" as if they were wheat or soybeans. This same group would not allow the same principles to apply to the forest.

Environmentalists collect wilderness. The problem lies in deciding when your collection is complete. If the collection is large enough, there's the problem of upkeep and management to consider or the treasured objects will waste away and lose value. The problem with environmentalists is not knowing when enough is enough. If environmentalists are allowed to continue helping themselves to public forest lands many who depend on the resource for their livelihood may lose their jobs.

I believe the US Forest Service has done an excellent job of managing this land up to now and will continue to do so in the future. I suggest we not change the rules and make it impossible to protect not only this land we are refering to as wilderness, but also all that land joining these areas.

Words like, abuse, willful neglect, desecration, destruction and rape have been used by preservationist groups concerning the management practices of the US Forest Service. I would encourage all involved, including congressmen, to visit these areas in question soon and see if you believe any of these words apply.

Once more, I urge you to look at a job well done and leave the management and protection of these lands in the hands of those who have done so well.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak out on this important subject.

Gene H. white

(Attachment follows:)

REASONS I OPPOSE WILDERNESS DESIGNATION

1. The United States Forest Service in the past and currently have done an excellent job of managing the National Forest in our area under the multiple use concept. The areas in question are in question today not because they have been reserved or saved by the Forest Service, but because they have been created and protected by the Forest Service under current policies. The Forest Service currently has the authority and latitude to protect this Property through the planning and decision making process of professional resource managers. I ask that the Forest Service be allowed to adhere to and continue that policy of multiple use as established by law.

2. It is not yet fully understood how the Clean Air Act and it's amendments of 1977 and later will effect the surrounding areas of a designated wilderness. The air quality standards that are set for any wilderness area do effect the operation and growth of a broad cross section of industrially based operations within a many mile radius of the wilderness. At this time we do not know all of the possible consequences of this act.

3. The fighting of forest fires, insects, and diseases in designated wilderness areas is severely limited. Access for the tools to stop the fire or insects is non exhistant in a designated wilderness area. This access is the single most important factor in controlling these "enemies of the forest". The areas within and adjacent to wilderness will be contaminated or burned. Forest Service records and court records show this to be an indisputable truth.

4. To create wilderness from productive lands currently managed for one, or several, valid uses is not compatible with other national goals for holding down inflation, providing adequate housing, reducing unemployment, and broadening the spectrum of outdoor recreation experiences for the majority of the public.

5. Many acres of private lands, within the National Forest boundaries, will be impacted by wilderness designation. The issue of the taking of private land or the establishing of rules concerning it's current and future use should be given serious thought. The Forest Service has the authority to condemn private property within or adjacent to wilderness areas, if the management of that land is not "appropriate". Legal precedent has already been established in the "Redwood National Forest" buffer zones for the taking by condemnation of private lands. This legal precedent affects every exhisting and proposed wilderness area.

Page #6

6. The tick problem in our area effects both humans and animals in our area. This tick problem lowers our quality of life and limits our potential for many industries, including tourism. Large amounts of private, State and Federal moneys have been spent on research efforts for erradication of ticks in this county and area of the State. Restrictions on wilderness designated areas will render any proposed effort ineffective. Again preservationists have filed lawsuits guaranteeing failure of these programs and establishing legal precedent to same.

7. Proponents of wilderness designation have stated publicly and in testimony the issue in their opinion of favorable economic impact of designated wilderness in our area. This opinion is based on proponents visits and use of the designated areas. The areas are here now, have always been here with or without designation. I have no record of one single contribution made to the economy of this area by proponents. It is not a reasonable assumption that many visitors will suddenly appear and contribute to our economy immediately upon designation or in the long term following designation. "The land is here now." "Where are the tourists now?"

8. Mineral development would be prohibited. We should not lock away potentially valuable minerals and fuels while the importing of same contributes to our trade deficient.

9. Timber harvesting is definitely not allowed in a wilderness. Local revenues derived from the sale of timber from National Forests will be reduced. In Addition, timber related jobs will be curtailed effecting whole local economies.

10. The locking up of timber in wilderness helps create a shortage of timber and wood products. The cost of building new homes is already beyond too many Americans. To take a commodity and in this case our only renewable resource and purposely reduce it's availability is foolhardy.

11. Wilderness designation permits little wildlife management. Most wildlife game species live in a "managed forest".

12. The Forest Service estimates that only less than 1% of the American people will ever visit a wilderness area.

13. There can be no manmade structures in a wilderness area. There can be no roads and off-road vehicles are not allowed. The only access allowed within a wilderness ares is foot traffic or on horseback. You cannot take a Sunday afternoon drive through a wilderness.

14. All of the National Forest land in Oklahoma joins the Arkansas border. There are currently designated wilderness areas joining this borderline on the Arkansas side. The use of those already established wilderness areas is available and the designation of Oklahoma land would not change the driving distance for those who wish to use designated wilderness by more than a few miles.

15. A wilderness area is not static, one does not stop the forest evolving at some desired state by Congressional action. Wilderness forests grow old, deteriorate, and die. There is no such thing as a living museum; to live means to change.

16. In our society, where we rightfully require all public and privately owned buildings and facilities to build access for the handicapped, we create wilderness areas which by their regulations forever forbid use of these areas to the handicapped. Oddly enough this is being done on federal property by the federal government. Can you imagine the public outcry if this was being done on private property.

17. The words "multiple use" includes use by all, including Wildlife Federations and Wilderness Proponents. It is not us who would exclude them, but they who would exclude us.

LARRY D. CHEEK
High School Principal

CLAUDE EBERLE
Superintendent

GEORGE BROWN
Junior High School Principal

Smithville Public Schools
Independent District 1-14
SMITHVILLE, OKLAHOMA 74957

Jan. 7, 1986

Re: Opposition to proposed wilderness area in southern LeFlore County, OK.

Honorable Congressmen:

I am Claude Eberle, Supt. of Smithville School District which is located in southern LeFlore County and northern McCurtain County, Oklahoma. I appear before you representing the school district and several of the citizens of the Beech Creek area that would be affected by the proposed wilderness area. I am listing five (5) points of opposition that I feel are of the utmost importance to our area.

The financial loss to our school district would be much heavier than proponents of the wilderness area are projecting. Five schools in the area receive monies from the Forest Reserve rentals of the Ouachita National Forest. Smithville School District receives an average of $20,000. a year. Four other school districts (Whitesboro, Talihina, Heavener, and Hodgens) receive monies from the Forest Reserve rentals. Two receive more and 2 receive less than Smithville. The monies are received according to the amount of timber harvested from the Ouachita National Forest. Removing approximately 15,000 acres from production will deplete these school funds. In addition, County road funds would receive less, which would hinder road building and maintenance of roads on our school bus routes and we can ill afford any less maintenance of our roads in southern LeFlore County. They are virtually impassable now.

Jobs would be affected some due to elimination of tree harvest in the proposed wilderness area and hunters that traditionally camp and hunt in the Ouachita National Forest do seasonal trading in Smithville during rifle, bow hunting, and black-powder season for deer and during spring and fall turkey seasons. Tourism has some economic effect in our area and the proposed wilderness area would eliminate motorized vehicles such as ATC's, dirt bike, 4-wheeling, and other recreational motorized vehicles.

My second point of opposition is biological effect. The proponents of the wilderness area use the natural setting of the area as their primary argument for the creation of the proposed wilderness area. We have a wilderness area of several thousand acres on the south edge of our district and I constantly observe the extensive areas of dead trees from insects and disease. This could be avoided by selective harvesting such as can be done in a National Forest. I would state here that I am opposed to "clear cutting" as has been done some in the Ouachita National Forest.

The underbrush and dead trees greatly add to the fire hazard and motorized fire fighting equipment is not allowed in wilderness areas without permission. By the time permission clears all channels, it is too late and the fire has done the damage to the wilderness area and surrounging areas. Fires are frequent in the Ouachita National Forest, so there is little likelihood of avoiding them in a National wilderness area.

My third point of opposition is grazing rights and the livestock use of the area would be prohibited. It is not widely known, but McCurtain County has the second largest number of cow-calf units of any county in Oklahoma and LeFlore county is third. There are large numbers of cows and horses in the mountains of Southern LeFlore County and northern McCurtain County and many of our residents depend exclusively on income from livestock for their living. Grazing helps to control underbrush and greatly reduces the fire hazard.

My fourth point of opposition to the proposed wilderness area is the strong threat of buffer zones of undetermined dimensions being placed around all national lands including wilderness areas. I realize that buffer zones are not yet statutory, but a buffer zone would affect a part of my district that would include bus routes and private lands, and would preclude industry of any nature. This concept threatens our way of life at Smithville.

My fifth point of opposition is largely geographical and political. The third Congressional District does not exist just to furnish scenery, water, and natural resources to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and other urban areas while we remain impoverished in our area. We want to use our resources to furnish jobs, have a standard of living that is, at least average, and to keep our young people in the area if they choose to stay. We are tired of being step-children and living off the benevolence of our urban cousins. We want jobs and development in the Third Congressional District. We want a way of taking care of our own needs, but we will not get that chance if we are merely an area of visitor interest because of our lakes and wilderness areas.

I will conclude by stating that I understand the need and purpose of national recreation areas and national wilderness areas, but let's not destroy any area for the benefit of once a year or once in a lifetime visitors.

OK
WC

OKLAHOMA WILDERNESS COALITION
P.O. Box 60882 Oklahoma City, OK 73146

STATEMENT OF MARK DERICHSWEILER
CHAIRMAN, OKLAHOMA WILDERNESS COALITION

BEFORE THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS, FAMILY FARMS, AND ENERGY
HONORABLE CHARLES WHITLEY, CHAIRMAN

HEARING ON WILDERNESS PROPOSALS
FOR THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST IN OKLAHOMA
JANUARY 7, 1986

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Watkins, ladies and gentlemen, I am Mark Derichsweiler, Chairman of the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition. The Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition is composed of approximately twenty citizen groups from throughout our State who share a keen interest in the preservation of our remaining wildlands.

We would first like to express our thanks to the subcommittee for holding this hearing today to learn the views of Oklahomans regarding wilderness in our State. We are particularly appreciative of the efforts of Congressman Watkins in arranging the hearing and extend our thanks for his interest in this issue.

Mr. Chairman, the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition strongly supports the preservation of four eligible roadless areas in our State as wilderness. We are pleased to hear the support of so many others expressed here today for protection of the Upper Kiamichi and Black Fork Mountain areas. We also favor wilderness status for these areas but there are two others, Rich Mountain and Beech Creek, which we feel are equally deserving of this designation.

The Oklahoma Natural Heritage Program has noted that the Rich Mountain area is distinguished by the presence not only of species of plants and animals endemic to the Ouachita Mountains, but also the presence of several species known to occur only on Rich Mountain. Protection as wilderness will ensure the integrity of this unique habitat and will complement the Robert S. Kerr Arboretum on the west boundary. Protection of this area also would enhance the values of Talimena Scenic Drive by preserving the high quality views which have made it famous.

The Beech Creek area is highly suitable for wilderness management due to the fact that it consists of a single, unified hydrologic unit, the Beech Creek drainage basin. This results in a minimum of impacts due to activities outside the area. The size shape and location of this area allow the visitor a solitude that is difficult to equal, yet access is such that many people could experience it. The variety of terrain, from rugged slopes to crystal clear mountain streams and gentle valleys, offer high quality wilderness attributes. This area is home to several plant species rare in

The Sooner Wilderness The Better

Oklahoma such as the American Beech tree, Mountain Azalea, and American Holly. Beech Creek also provides prime habitat for game animals, especially wild turkey. For all these reasons, Beech Creek is perhaps the most treasured of the potential wilderness areas. Its future is certainly of great concern to the members of the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition. Unfortunately, it is also the most endangered because of the logging and road building which has already been scheduled. This area would be an outstanding contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation system and we strongly support its protection as wilderness.

Oklahoma currently has only one designated wilderness area, located in the Witchita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge. This area is so over-used that tight restrictions have had to be placed on visitors. We believe that wilderness status for all four of these forest roadless areas is needed to meet the demand for wilderness recreation and disperse this use. Forest wilderness areas will also provide a range of wilderness experiences for State residents.

Mr. Chairman, I have personally hiked and explored all four of these areas. Each of them is individually unique and deserving of formal protection as wilderness. We in the Oklahoma Wilderness Coalition are eager to work with you and Congressman Watkins to develop legislation that will protect these remnants of an important part of our natural heritage.

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CHAIRMAN
CORRECTIONS & PENAL AFFAIRS

MEMBER
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RULES
JUDICIARY
PUBLIC SAFETY

House of Representatives
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

January 3, 1986

Hon. Wes Watkins
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Watkins:

I have corresponded with you several times in the past, with regard to the proposed LeFlore County Wilderness Area. I am sorry that it is not possible for me to attend your public hearing on January 7th.

Upon making inquiry to the U.S. Forest Service in the past, I have become very concerned in connection with the proposed areas on the following points:

1) The prohibition of attacking beetles or other insect problems.
2) The prohibition against attacking tree blights and diseases, within the area.
3) The prohibition against fighting fire that could break out within the area.
4) The loss of various revenues to LeFlore County and the school districts.

It would be devastating in my opinion not to be able to attack a blight or insect infestation, or be unable to fight fire. These prohibitions could create an extreme hazard to all of the surrounding lands, which would not be in the best public interest, in my opinion.

The school districts having national forest land in their area, and county government should not be required to subsidize these areas by loss of revenues. This is discrimination against the school children and citizenry affected, in my opinion.

We are requesting that you place this testimony in the record, and publicly read it to those attending, if such is permissible.

Respectfully,

JAMES E. HAMILTON

JEH/dh

Oklahoma State Senate
STATE CAPITOL
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105

December 7th, 1986

The Honorable Charles Whitley, M. C.
Chairman, House Agriculture Sub-Committee
Poteau Wilderness Hearing
Carl Albert Junior College Auditorium
Poteau, Oklahoma 74953

Dear Congressman Whitley:

Thank you very much for your interest in Oklahoma, shown by your willingness to work with our congressman, The Honorable Wes Watkins, in hosting an official hearing on forest legislation in our home area.

Please accept my regrets that due to the opening of the Oklahoma Legislature and a prior commitment important to our county, I am unable to be with you. I will take this means to introduce testimony and I sincerely thank you for the opportunity.

Others will testify, I'm sure, that meetings to consider the proposal to designate some areas of the Ouachita National Forest as wilderness, have been held previously. I attended three. The first was to organize a LeFlore County Coalition For Wilderness. A second was held 30 miles south of Poteau near the proposed area. A third held at this college setting was well advertised and attended by an estimated 75 interested citizens and of the citizens expressing their desires to me, a great majority favored setting aside some of Oklahoma's little used forest areas specifically for back packers, horse and mule riders, hunters and bird and animal watching with no commercial activities, timber harvesting or motor vehicles.

At the last Poteau meeting, two expressed a preference for no wilderness, four desired only two areas set aside and some 35 to 40 favored requesting that all four suggested areas be set aside. Some 15 to 20 did not register a preference at that time.

I understand that permission for entrance will be granted in wilderness legislation for disease and pest control and for fire suppression.

Oklahoma State Senate
STATE CAPITOL
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105

Page 2

If there is also discussion of clear cutting practices in the national forest, area citizens have expressed a strong desire to limit the size of clear cuts, do more selective cutting and leave more roadless areas.

Good management of the resources can be achieved without roads on every section line in this beautiful mountian area.

Thanks again Congressman Whitley and Congressman Watkins for letting us express our desires.

Very sincerely yours,

Joe Johnson
Senator Joe Johnson

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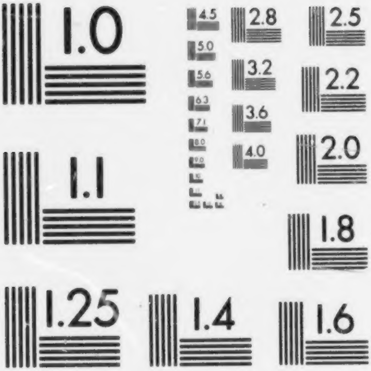
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